THE GIFT OF BEAUTY.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"Is she not loveliness itself?" said a young man named Atwood, to a friend who stood by his side. "My eyes follow her as if there were a spell in her beauty."

"I have often said," was replied to this remark, "that Florence D'Almaigne was the handsomest woman I had ever seen."

"You said the truth. I never saw her equal."

"As your hand is still free, why don't you seek to gain favor in the eyes of this queen of beauty?" said the friend.

"There would be little chance for me," replied Atwood, "while so many, with pretensions far more imposing than mine, are eagerly seeking her favor. I may worship at a distance, but dare not approach and lay my hand upon the goddess."

"You know the old adage, Atwood," said the friend, smiling. "Faint heart never won fair lady. You are as good as any of the aspirants for her favor, and far better than most of them. Press up boldly, then. It is the boldest that wins the most beautiful. And she is worth the winning if I am rightly informed, for she is as good as beautiful."

"Her face is the image of her mind. No one can be long in her company without half forgetting her pure, bright countenance in love for her purer spirit. But, as I said before, she is not to be mine; I must worship at a distance. Look at her now! See how unconsciously she leans toward Courtney while he speaks to her, as if she were striving to comprehend in every word he utters, some deeper meaning. Her heart is already his."

"I trust not. He is not worthy to possess her heart."

"He is utterly unworthy!" replied Atwood, "for he has an impure mind, and is wanting in sound principles. He is attracted only by the surpassing beauty of her face. The unfading beauty of her mind he does not see; and even if he could see it, he would deem it an inferior attraction."

Florence D'Almaigne, the young lady about whom the two friends were conversing, possessed, in a high degree, the dangerous gift of beauty. Wherever she went, she became the centre around which gathered a crowd of admirers—the boldest forcing themselves at once upon her attention, while the more modest and more excellent looked on from a greater distance. Among the most ardent of her admirers were Atwood, just introduced, and a young man named Courtney. Atwood lacked confidence in himself, while Courtney was always ready to press forward to an advanced position. The one drew back from the place which his merit entitled him to assume, while the other assumed the place for which he was really unworthy. From this it will be seen how unequal were the chances of the young men for gaining favor in the eyes of Florence. The remark of Atwood as to the unworthiness of Courtney, caused this reply.

"What you say, my friend, is perfectly true, and, therefore, the stronger reason exists why you should press forward and secure the hand of Florence. You love her for the beauty of her mind as well as the beauty of her face, and, therefore, you are more worthy of her and more justly entitled to her hand. Claim it boldly, and it is yours!"

But Atwood shook his head.

"It's no use. Already her heart is more than half in the possession of Courtney."

"I don't believe it."

"Look for yourself. If she did not love him, could she be so lost to all around her as she now seems to be. I have been looking at her for ten minutes, and I am sure her eyes have seen nothing but his face, and her ear heard nothing but the tones of his voice, during all that time."

"Give her eyes a chance to see your face, and her ears an opportunity to hear the sound of your voice," replied the friend, "and I doubt not that she will like the expression of the one and the tones of the other far better. You are too diffident, Atwood—you think too humbly of yourself. Lay this weakness, I had almost said folly, aside, and for the sake of Florence D'Almaigne if for nothing else, step forward like a man and win her for your bride. You can do it—I know you can. See! They are about forming a cotillion in the next room. Go at once and ask the hand of Florence for the first set."

"Courtney has secured that of course."

"Don't be so certain of that. It is more than probable that he has not even noticed the movement for a dance. But, even if he has, claim her hand for the second set; and if engaged for that, secure it for the third."

Thus urged, Atwood passed across the room to where Florence sat by the side of Courtney, and asked her if he might claim the favor of her hand for the cotillion that was forming.

"Cotillion!" said Courtney, in surprise, looking around. "Bless me! Are we to have a dance? I didn't notice what was going on."

With a graceful inclination of her head, and a smile that went direct to the heart of Atwood,

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Florence accepted the invitation, and rising up, drew her hand within the offered arm of the young man. As they were moving away, Courtney, who had recovered himself, said—

"Shall I have the pleasure of your hand for the next set, Miss D'Almaigne?"

"Certainly," she replied, and then advanced to the next room with Atwood.

On their leaving the floor, after having danced through the cotillion, Courtney met them, and attempted to take Florence from the arm of Atwood, by stepping forward with a manner perfectly polite, yet coolly impudent, which said, "you have danced with the lady, which is all the claim you have to her." But Atwood retained the lady's hand within his arm, conducted her to a seat, and sat down beside her. Courtney took a chair on the other side, and attempted to engage her in conversation; but Atwood, who felt annoyed at the manner of his rival, determined not to be thrown into the shade quite so easily. He, therefore, exerted himself in order to keep the attention of Florence, and succeeded in leading the conversation, and enchaining her interest in spite of all the attempts that were made by Courtney to divert her mind from the topics that were introduced.

Florence had always highly esteemed Atwood. The excellent qualities of his mind and heart, were well understood by her, and justly appreciated. But she had never looked upon him as a lover, because, so far as she could understand him, he had never approached her as a lover. Here she was mistaken; and her mistake arose from this cause. In consequence of her great beauty she was surrounded by admirers from the time she first entered society. Lovers pressed forward, and sought, with the utmost eagerness, to gain her favor. Admired, courted, flattered, she learned to expect something more than a quiet, somewhat retiring and deferential manner in any one who approached her as a lover. If there was not some ardor manifested—some more than ordinary delight at being in her company, expressed, she could not imagine that any deeper feeling than one of mere friendship could exist. From the cause here assigned, she had remained in entire ignorance of the deep and true affection with which she was loved by Atwood. Had she known the nature of *his* feelings, others might have approached her in vain.

On the particular occasion now referred to, the evident pleasure that Atwood seemed to have in her company, and the more than usual efforts that were made by him to interest her, were particularly gratifying. She had been pleased, and more than pleased with Courtney; but she could not help seeing and feeling how greatly Atwood was his superior in all the qualities that a woman could truly love. Instinctively her heart warmed toward Atwood, and she felt that in loving one like him, and being blessed with his manly love in return, she could indeed be happy. But this was a feeling that only existed for a little while, for she was engaged to Courtney for the next cotillion, and was then separated from Atwood, who, not being of an ardent temperament, could not again press forward and force himself upon her attention as he had done under the instigation of his friend. To him it seemed a lowering of himself to come into rivalry with a man like Courtney.

"If she can love him, she can't love me," he said to himself, with some bitterness and a slight feeling of contempt, as he stood aloof during the rest of the evening, and saw her monopolized almost entirely by Courtney.

From that time, instead of visiting Miss D'Almaigne more frequently, and showing by more palpable signs that he loved her, Atwood, with a strange inconsistency, went to see her less frequently, thus leaving a fairer field to Courtney, who, in consequence of the interest the other had manifested for Florence at the party, pressed his suit with increasing ardor. A result such as might naturally be expected, followed. "The boldest won the most beautiful."

It soon become know that Florence was the affianced bride of Charles Courtney. This intelligence had a more serious effect upon Atwood than he had anticipated. When the fact came indisputably to his knowledge, which it did just as he was making up his mind to lay aside his diffidence and reserve, and boldly present himself as a suitor for the hand and heart of one whose love would be, he felt, the greatest blessing of his life, it stunned, confused and almost maddened him.

"Fool—fool—fool that I am!" he mentally ejaculated. "I might have won her; but now it is too late!"

From that time the young man was changed. He went no more into company. He became thoughtful, silent and melancholy. This change was observed, and formed the subject of remarks which failed not to reach the ears of Florence.

"I expected to hear of some broken heart when your engagement was announced," said a young friend to her, a few days after the event.

"Did you indeed!" returned Florence, smiling. "How many catastrophes of this kind have occurred, to your certain knowledge?"

"I have only heard of one case yet," replied the friend.

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"There is one, then?"

"Oh, yes. One decided case of a broken heart."

"Indeed! Pray who is the unfortunate sufferer?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Oh, no! I have not the least idea."

"I don't believe you have. I never thought that he aspired to the distinction of one of your lovers; although I knew him as a warm friend and admirer."

"So much the more wonderful! Who is he?"

"Henry Atwood."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Florence, her face becoming at once serious.

"It is true. They say he is very much changed, and has not gone into company since the fact of your engagement to Mr. Courtney became know. I am sure I havn't met him anywhere for over two months. Have you?"

"No. But there is doubtless some other cause for this than the one you have assigned."

"It is said not. Mr. S——— told me yesterday, that to his certain knowledge, Atwood has long been deeply in love with you, but, seeing you surrounded by such a crowd of admirers, thought it hopeless to press his suit."

"Not a word of it true," returned Florence.

But her friend persisted in declaring that it was just as she had said.

Although Miss D'Almaigne asserted her entire disbelief in what had been alleged, yet the impression that it might be true could not be wholly resisted. When alone, and she pondered more seriously upon what she had heard, and remembered that she had not received a visit from Atwood, nor met him anywhere in company, for at least two months, this impression gained strength. As it thus gained strength from many more evidences that were presented to her, it produced a feeling of tenderness whenever she thought of Atwood, and caused something so much like regret that she had not known his real sentiments sooner, that she was startled and alarmed at her own state of mind, and endeavored to thrust aside every thought on the subject that presented itself. But this she found by no means an easy task. For a time she could think of nothing else, which so distressed her that the change in her feelings was noticed by her friends, and even by her intended husband.

Having gained the object of his pursuit, as far as her consent to marry him was concerned, the ardent manners of Courtney gave place to a more quiet exterior and the repose of self-satisfaction. Little and by little his true character began to show itself, and there were not unfrequently exhibited, to the eyes of Florence, traits she could not admire, nor even approve. Involuntarily contrasts would be made between him and Atwood as to some particular thing that would show itself. This was often done without her taking any notice of the mental process, although it impressed itself, with all its effects, upon her mind; when she became at any time conscious of such a train of thoughts, she condemned it as wrong, and sought to fix her attention upon some other subjects.

The nearer the wedding day of Florence approached, the more disturbed became her mind, and the more did her heart shrink from the anticipated union. She had met Atwood but once since the time of her engagement. It was at the house of a very intimate friend of the young man's where he happened to call, not dreaming that she was there. He met Florence with an embarrassed air. When he addressed her, it was with a polite formality altogether different from his former manner. Atwood only staid about half an hour, and then went away.

"He is very much changed," remarked the friend, after the young man had retired. "It grieves me to see him. I'm afraid his business hasn't turned out well, for he told me, the last time he was here, that he had sold out his store, and was going to leave the city."

"Indeed!" Florence spoke with a quickness of tone, and an expression of surprise so strong, that her friend looked at her earnestly for a moment or two, and then said—

"Yes. He leaves next week, I believe."

"Where is he going?"

"I did not enquire, particularly; but somewhere South or West, I believe. It is singular what could have come over him all at once. I tried to jest with him about being disappointed in love, but he did not appear to relish it very much, and so I said no more. I am half inclined to believe, though, that it is something of this kind. But who could have jilted him?"

"You said, just now, that you thought it was some business matter that troubled him," said Florence, wishing to effect a change in the tenor of her friend's remarks.

"So I did. But sometimes I think one thing and sometimes another. I am more inclined, however, to the opinion that he has been disappointed in love. If so, who could have jilted him? as I just said. That is what puzzles me. I never knew that he addressed any one seriously. In fact, the only lady I ever heard him admire was yourself. Don't blush so! It's the truth. But it wasn't you, of course. Well! Poor fellow! I'm sorry for him from my heart, for he is one of the best of young men. If any one has trifled with his affections, she'll regret it

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before she dies, or I'm mistaken. She will be lucky, indeed, if she gets a husband half as worthy as he is."

This conversation took place about a month previous to the time appointed for the wedding of Florence. It tended in no way to increase the pleasure with which she looked forward to that period, for since a question as to the entire worthiness of Courtney had been created by little acts, words, and omissions that forced themselves upon her attention shortly after her engagement with him, she had observed him more closely, and read many leaves in the book of his character before unturned. The consequence was that she shrunk more and more from him every day.

About two weeks before the time arrived at which Florence was to be married, she was attending a large party. During the evening, while sitting near to one side of the folding doors that communicated between the two parlors, she found herself so close to a couple of young men in the adjoining parlor, who were partly concealed from view, as to learn all that they said. She did not give any particular heed to their words until their mention of her intended husband's name caused a sudden throb of her heart.

"There's Courtney," said one of them.

"He's to be married to Miss D'Almaigne soon, I believe," remarked the other.

"So it is said. Well! There's no accounting for tastes. How Miss D'Almaigne ever came to fancy him—a fellow with more impudence than brains, and more pretension than principle—is what I can't understand. I know half a dozen young men, between whom and Courtney there is no kind of comparison, who would have jumped at her; but they were too modest to put in their claims for such a queen of beauty. Ah me! I feel sorry for her. She is a lovely girl, and it is said as good as she is beautiful. As to her ever being happy with Courtney, that is out of the question, and she will discover it to her sorrow before she is a year married. It is a dangerous thing to possess beauty like hers. It is almost sure to bring unhappiness in the married life."

"It will certainly bring it, in her case," was replied. "Courtney has been attracted alone by her beauty. Her goodness he has no ability to appreciate; for his heart is too depraved. I know him well, and know him to be a bad man. If I thought she would believe me, I would tell her some things that would open her eyes, and brave all the consequences he might visit upon me. But to do so would be useless; she no doubt thinks him perfection. I wish it may always be so!"

"So do I; but that is impossible."

Here the subject of conversation was changed, and Florence moved to another part of the room as quickly as possible. The young men remained perfectly ignorant of the fact that she had overheard their words. About ten minutes afterward Florence left the rooms, under the plea of not feeling well, and returned home. It was not a mere plea. The unhappy girl was sick at heart.

Florence D'Almaigne had no mother to counsel her in an emergency like this. That best friend had been dead for many years. Her father was a stern-tempered man; one to whom she feared to mention what she had heard, lest it should lead to serious consequences. All night she lay in anxious thought as to the best course for her to pursue. Before morning she had made up her mind firmly, not to consummate the marriage contract, predicating her resolution upon the agreement of some things she had overheard in regard to Courtney, with her own observation of his character. She also made up her mind to inform him by letter, immediately, of her resolution.

At the breakfast-table her father noticed that she looked pale and unhappy. He enquired in regard to her health; but she answered him evasively, saying something about not being able to sleep, and having a violent head-ache.

Immediately after breakfast, Florence retired to her room, and wrote, as follows, to Courtney:

"Dear Sir—The nearer the time fixed for our marriage approaches, the more unhappy do I become. When I consented to be your wife I did not fully know my own heart. I now see that the proposed union, if it should take place, will make me, of all persons, the most miserable. This being so, would it be right either for your sake or mine, for me to take upon myself vows that cannot come from the heart? If your wife is wretched, can you be happy? No, you cannot be! Release me, then, I beg of you, from the promise I made to become your wife. Do not seek to change my present feelings, for you cannot succeed. A more intimate intercourse with you, which I have had since our engagement, has made me more intimately acquainted than I possibly could have been before that engagement took place, with pecularities in your disposition and traits in your character, which, instead of drawing my heart closer to, have estranged it from you. I cannot help this. It is a fact in the nature of things, and one which neither you nor I should lightly disregard.

Yours, &c., Florence."

Mr. D'Almaigne was sitting in his office about twelve o'clock on that day, when young Courtney entered. He had a strange agitated look. Without a word of preface, he placed the letter of Florence in his hand.

"In the name of goodness! what does all this

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mean?" exclaimed the father, after running his eye hurriedly over the letter.

"That's what I wish you to explain, sir," said Courtney, compressing his lips, and eyeing Mr. D'Almaigne with a steady look.

There was something in the expression of the eye, face, and tone of the young man that Mr. D'Almaigne did not like. Before replying to his words, he read the letter of Florence over again slowly, and as thoughtfully as he could.

"I presume you can explain it better than I can," he said, looking up from the letter, and speaking in a firm, yet mild voice. "This is the first I have heard of this matter. Pray, what has led to it?"

"That is just what I desire to know from you. It is not to be presumed that your daughter would take a step like this without consulting her father."

"I have told you, young man, that this is the first I have heard of the matter!" replied Mr. D'Almaigne, sternly.

"Do you intend sustaining your daughter in the step she has taken?" asked Courtney.

"She is of age. If she adhere to what she intimates in this letter, I shall not attempt to control her."

"Then, sir, I warn you, that this is not the last you will hear of the matter!" returned Courtney, in a passionate manner, taking the open letter from Mr. D'Almaigne's hand, and turning away as he thrust it into his pocket.

The father hurried home.

"Florence, dear," he said, tenderly, on meeting his daughter, "I wish to know from you all that has prompted the strange letter you sent to-day to Mr. Courtney. Speak freely. If you can show me that you are right, I will sustain you."

This was so different from what she had expected from her father, that it melted her to tears, and it was sometime before she could control her feelings sufficiently to give him a full history of all she had thought, felt, and observed for some months, and the startling confirmation of her fears that had accidentally occurred on the previous evening.

"Who were the young men who spoke so freely of Mr. Courtney?" asked the father.

Florence hesitated.

"Speak freely, my child. I must know all."

Florence mentioned their names, and the remarks which each had made.

"If Robert M——— said that, there is truth in it. Thank heaven, my child! for saving you from a union that must have made you wretched."

On the next day, Mr. D'Almaigne received a notice from an attorney, that he had been instructed by Charles Courtney to institute a suit against his daughter, for breach of a marriage contract, and that damages were to be laid at ten thousand dollars. Mr. D'Almaigne immediately called upon the two young men alluded to as having conversed quite freely about Courtney. To them he related what his daughter had overheard them say, and what had been the result, and finished by asking if they had any facts to which they would be willing to testify in court, that would be received as sufficient proof of the unfitness of Courtney to become the husband of his daughter. One of them declined having anything to do with the matter, but the other was made of different material. He not only related to Mr. D'Almaigne many unprincipled and immoral acts of Courtney, but avowed his willingness to give clear testimony on the subject in court, if necessary.

"Are you willing to meet Courtney, in the presence of his own lawyer, and repeat what you have repeated to me?" asked Mr. D'Almaigne.

"Without hesitation. It is a duty I owe to innocence, to truth, to justice."

"Are you not afraid of consequences, personal to yourself?"

"No, sir. I never think of anything personal where right is concerned," was the manly reply.

In a day or two Courtney was confronted with the young man, and became, for the first time, aware of the notoriety of some of his acts. He blustered and threatened a good deal to conceal his chagrin, but there it all rested. No more was ever heard of the suit. Some months afterward certain transactions of a disreputable character in which he had been engaged, coming to light, he deemed it most prudent to leave the city, to which he did not soon return.

The effect of all this upon Florence was very unhappy. Her spirits sunk, and her health suffered. She withdrew from society, almost entirely; when she did appear, every one noticed that the brilliancy of her cheeks had faded, and that her eyes no longer sparkled with their former lustre. Her voice too had lost the witchery of its tones. She was still beautiful, but her beauty did not arrest the attention as quickly as before. In course of time this depression of spirits wore off, and Florence went into company more frequently. The flush of health came back to her cheeks, the light to her eyes, and the heart-refreshing melody to the tones of her voice. But her whole manner was more quiet, and she rather shunned than courted the attentions that were everywhere paid to her. Suitors as before sought her hand, but she gave

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encouragement to none, and, if any, more bold than the rest, pressed forward and told the story of their love, she gently declined the generous tender of their hearts. Years passed away, and though not unwooed, Florence D'Almaigne was still unwedded.

Business called Mr. D'Almaigne to the West about five years after the occurrence of the principal event of our story. He had only been absent a few weeks when intelligence reached Florence that, from the upsetting of a stage, he had been seriously injured, and was then lying at a hotel in Cincinnati. Without a moment's delay Florence made preparations for going to her father. She started on the next morning. When she arrived at Cincinnati, she found that he had received several severe fractures, and was otherwise badly hurt; but that he was out of all danger, and recovering as rapidly as the nature of his injuries would permit.

During the long conversation that Florence held with her father about the accident, the pain he had suffered, and the circumstances attending his removal to Cincinnati, and the care and attention he had received there, he mentioned the fact that a young man who had left their native city some years ago, by the name of Atwood, and who was boarding in the hotel, had shown him the greatest kindness, visiting him many times each day, and sometimes remaining up with him, when his pain was worse, nearly all night long.

The cause of the deepening color on Florence's cheeks was altogether unknown to her father. He had scarcely done speaking, when a tap on the door was followed by the entrance of the very person who had been mentioned. He looked surprised, and was evidently confused at seeing Florence, and it required a very strong effort on her part not to betray too palpably the deep agitation of her bosom.

"Mrs. Courtney! I am happy to see you," said Atwood, advancing and taking her hand, "though grieved at the sad accident that has caused your hurried visit to our Western country."

"Stop—stop, my young friend!" said Mr. D'Almaigne, "not quite so fast. Not Mrs. Courtney, thank heaven! but Florence D'Almaigne."

Atwood let the hand of Florence, that he still held, fall quickly, and stepped back one or two paces, with a look of bewilderment.

"I thought you were married, years ago," he said.

"She was to have been," replied her father, "but we discovered the unworthiness of her suitor before it was too late."

We need hardly say that Atwood remained quite as attentive to Mr. D'Almaigne as before the arrival of his daughter; nor will the reader be at all surprised to hear that, before the old gentleman was able to leave the city, he had seen enough to satisfy him that the young man and Florence were on the very best terms imaginable. Shortly after his return home, he received proposals from Atwood for the hand of his daughter, which, on reference to her, were accepted, provided he would move back again to the East. As may be supposed, this was not considered a hard proviso.

"Mine at last," said Atwood, as he sat gazing into the face of his wife, some days after their marriage. "For this happiness I never dared even to hope. If you had been less beautiful you would have been mine years ago."

"The gift of beauty had like to have proved a fatal gift to me," replied Florence, a thoughtful shade passing over her face.

"As it proves to hundreds every year. But the danger is past now."

"For which my heart is overflowing with thankfulness," returned Florence, as her eyes filled with tears, and she leaned forward and rested her lovely face upon the breast of her husband.

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IMOGEN ELLERSLY.
BY MISS LOUISE OLIVIA HUNTER.
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IMOGEN ELLERSLY.

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IMOGEN ELLERSLY.

BY MISS LOUISE OLIVIA HUNTER.

It was the twilight hour, and Imogen Ellersly, leaning pensively on her hand, gazed from the window of her husband's princely country-seat that overlooked the broad and stately Hudson. A melancholy shade hung over her lovely countenance, and her eyes were dim and heavy as if with weeping. Those who had seen her as a bride but two short months before, would scarcely have recognized the gay and brilliant belle in that now sad and mournful face.

"Alas!" she said, "had I but listened to Grace. But it is too late now. Oh! these gilded chains, they are cankering to my heart—wealth, wealth, what are you without love!"

The speaker had been the orphan daughter of a New York merchant who died bankrupt. Beautiful, talented, and amiable in every other respect, she possessed one fault—pride. When, therefore, at the death of her father, she was forced to accept the shelter of an uncle's house, the idea of being a burden on him stung her to the soul. He was unmarried, and in reality gratified to be of service to her, but unconsciously to himself his kindness assumed a patronizing air, and this was a daily thorn in the proud heart of Imogen. There were moments when she envied the humblest individual who labored for his or her support. This sentiment was increased by the character of her mind. Imogen was a passionate admirer of the beautiful, indeed a poetess; and like many persons of genius she possessed the keenest sensibilities.

"Ask any woman of genius why she writes, and she will tell you it is because she cannot help it; that there are times when a power that she can neither comprehend nor resist, impels her to the sweet exercise of her intellect; that at such moments there is happiness in the very exertion—a thrilling excitement that makes the action of thought 'its own exceeding reward,' that her heart is crowded with feelings which pant for language and for sympathy, and that ideas gush up from the mind unsought and uncalled-for, as waters leap from their fount when the earth is deluged with moisture." So said one whom experience had taught, and thus also was it with Imogen Carlton. The use of her pen was her favorite occupation; it whiled away many an hour of sadness—and she was never happier than when obeying "that irresistible impulse for creation" which not unseldom pervaded her heart. It might well be supposed that a being so constituted could never be happy in domestic life, unless connected with one of congenial habits and pursuits—and so thought the friend of Imogen, Grace Lester. From long and close intimacy she had become well acquainted with the disposition and attainments of Imogen Carlton—and she was quite certain that the happiness of her highly gifted friend could only be insured by a union with a kindred mind. Grace had already selected a husband for her friend—one who had attained a prominent place in the ranks of literature, and was, therefore, well fitted to appreciate the talents of Imogen. With heartfelt delight she had observed the daily increasing interest with which Leonard Stanton regarded her friend—when suddenly, from some unknown reason, he became cold and distant in his demeanor toward Imogen. The latter had been acquainted with him just long enough to discover the nobleness of his character, and the knowledge she had gained had completely won her regard. Deeply pained at his coldness, of which she could not divine the cause, Imogen had yet sufficient pride te enable her to treat Stanton with apparent indifference. She marked his restraint whenever they met, and thinking that he had never cared for her, she resolved to strive against a passion that could only be a source of unhappiness. In the height of wounded pride she had yielded to the earnest solicitations of her uncle, and accepted the offer of Arthur Ellersly, a rich but fashionable suitor, to whom till then, she had never given the slightest encouragement. And when she had promised her hand she would not allow herself to give way to doubt,

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but immediately invested the one she had chosen with all the qualities of him whose love she had so eagerly coveted—not pausing to ascertain whether such were really the case.

Once only she had wavered: it was on the day she announced to Grace her betrothal.

"You are not in earnest, Imogen?" said Grace.

"Dearest Grace—do not gaze on me thus," replied Imogen. "I little dreamed that, when I should confide my secret to my best-loved friend, she would reply with words and glances of reproach."

"Ah! Imogen," replied Grace Lester, and her eyes were glistening with tears as she drew her companion gently toward her, "do you not know that it is my anxiety for your future welfare that leads me to act as I do?"

"And yet, Grace, now, when bright prospects have unexpectedly become mine again—and when all others are hastening to offer me congratulations—why do you, you whose approval I value more than that of all the rest, hold back?"

"Listen to me, dear Imogen," said Grace, very seriously. "In the first place, you do not love this man. Nay, start not, dearest: though you may try to deceive yourself, I tell you, you do not love him. Yours is the wealth of rich feeling, Imogen; yours is a heart that to throb with happiness must ever exist in the atmosphere of love, and I am perfectly well convinced that naught but misery would be your portion were you wedded to one for whom you cared not. In the next place, he does not feel for you that earnest affection which I know you would expect from the one to whom you gave your hand in marriage. He seeks you because you are beautiful and talented; not that he admires those talents which even were you devoid of beauty, would enable you to shine as a 'bright, particular star'—but that you will move as a luminary among the fashionable circles which he frequents, and that the world might say, 'that is the lovely and accomplished Mrs. Ellersly.' But when your loveliness has faded, when time has dimmed the brightness of your eyes, and stolen the roses from your cheeks—where then will be the bond of sympathy that should still unite you to your husband's heart if you wed Arthur Ellersly? And can you bid me give you my congratulations when I am well assured that with him you can never be happy?"

"Say no more, Grace, I beseech you," interrupted Imogen, with a shudder—"you wrong Ellersly, indeed you do—and I must not, and will not listen to these gloomy predictions."

"But you *must* hear me out, Imogen," persisted Grace Lester, grasping her friend's hand as she was about to turn away, and detaining her by force, "Arthur Ellersly and yourself are not congenial spirits. *You* are what nature has made you, a lover of the beautiful, and a child of poesy—and it is your great delight to give vent in song to the sweet emotions with which your heart is ever overflowing—while on the contrary, *he* seldom even opens a book unless it be to ridicule it. How would you feel, Imogen, to have the bright effusions of your pen treated with scorn and contempt by him with whom all the days of your life were to be spent?"

Again a slight tremor passed over the delicate frame of the young girl, and she replied in a voice broken with emotion, "I could not long live thus—it would be death by inches—slow, but certain. But oh! Grace, you are mistaken, indeed you are—he is far different from what you have represented."

Grace Lester shook her head sadly. "Would that I could think so," she resumed after a brief silence, "but, alas! it is not in my power. But this is not all. You are formed for domestic happiness, Imogen—while Arthur Ellersly has been accustomed to finding pleasure only in a constant routine of gaieties, and marriage will not at all alter him in this respect. And now, Imogen, let me mention to you a fact, which, setting all others aside, ought to be an invincible obstacle to your union with Ellersly. You love another."

"Grace!"

"Yes—you love another—and that other is well worthy the affection of a heart like yours. Ah! Imogen, if you were to ask my congratulations upon your union with Leonard Stanton, your request would be speedily granted."

"That can never be," replied Imogen, in a tone almost of agony, while her fair cheek grew ashy pale, and her whole frame trembled with emotion, "oh, Grace! Grace! if you would not break my heart, breathe not *his* name in my ear."

"Forgive me, darling, if I have said aught to wound you," said Grace Lester, tenderly drawing her companion again toward her, and imprinting a kiss of affection upon her brow—"but it is for your own sweet sake that I speak thus. And oh! Imogen, loving him as you do, how can you think of becoming the wife of another—how can you teach the lip to utter that to which the heart can never respond?"

For a few moments Imogen Carlton seemed greatly agitated, but suddenly restraining her emotion, she said—"yes, Grace, you have indeed guessed the truth; and yet though I have dearly loved him I can never be his wife. There

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was a time when I was foolish enough to think such a thing might be possible, but it is all over now—and my only hope is that I may be able by earnest strivings, to subdue the throbbings of a heart that still beats too wildly whenever his name is spoken."

"But why should this be, Imogen?—is he not worthy your love?"

"Worthy? Oh! yes, Grace, yes—but Stanton does not deem *me* worthy *his* affection: he does not return my love."

This avowal was followed by a burst of tears, and leaning her head upon her friend's shoulder, Imogen wept bitterly. After a pause she continued, drawing her slight form proudly up.

"For many months past Leonard Stanton has avoided me, and whenever we have met I have been treated with marked coldness. It was not always thus, and I know not why he has changed of late—yet of this I am quite certain, that ere many more weeks have passed I shall drive his image forever from my heart, by becoming the wife of Arthur Ellersly."

"And thus bring upon yourself eternal misery," said Grace, sternly.

"You are mistaken, Grace," interrupted Imogen, rather haughtily, "and *I* am ashamed of my own weakness in loving one who cares not for me—and will not for his sake drive all hopes of happiness away by refusing the proffered devotion of an honest heart. I have promised my hand to Arthur Ellersly, and, in spite of all that can be said, that promise shall be kept unbroken."

"And are there *no other motives*, Imogen, that will induce you to act thus? Are you not influenced by the wealth of your admirer, and by the thought that your marriage with him will release you from dependance upon your uncle?"

"I will confess to you, Grace, that a wish to become independant of my uncle's bounty has ever been a chief inducement when I have thought of marriage. It is very galling to a spirit like my own to be dependant on the kindness of one upon whom I have no claim."

"But surely such a situation is far preferable to a marriage with a man whom you do not love."

"Even though I do not care for him now, Grace, I can and will love him when it shall be my duty to do so."

"Then, Imogen, if you are bent upon sacrificing yourself, I only hope that my forebodings concerning this marriage may not be realized—and though I cannot offer my congratulations, I will pray God to bless you." Once more Grace Lester drew her friend to her heart, and tenderly kissed the cheek of Imogen—then turning hastily away, she left the apartment.

Two months after, the sacrifice was consummated. Alas! too soon Imogen found that Grace had prophesied truly.

"Oh!" she said, weeping, "that I had listened to my friend. Yet this is wrong. I can and will be happy. I *will love* Mr. Ellersly."

Could she?

Two years had passed since the evening on which our story begins, and Imogen Ellersly was seated in her boudoir, absorbed in earnest meditation. A beautiful babe lay sleeping upon a couch beside her, and a smile of ineffable tenderness would wreathe the lips of the young mother, as ever and anon arousing from her reverie, she bent anxiously over her darling, and pressed a kiss of love upon that cherub brow.

Imogen had changed much since we last looked upon her: the joyous light had left her eye, her cheek had grown strangely pale, and the mournful expression that often flickered across that sweet face, told of the heart's unrest. She had felt sadder than usual that day, for she had been indulging in a melancholy pleasure, the perusal of some old letters written by early friends, most of whom now slept beneath the sod. Old letters! How many sad but sweet memories are ever entwined around these precious treasures! With what tender and subdued sensations does the eye rest upon the tracery of the departed! and as the gaze lingers upon these memorials of the past, many a loved form rises again to view, and laughing tones ring once more gladly upon the ear, whose eloquence has alas! been forever hushed in the stillness of the tomb.

Her soul filled with a thousand mournful recollections, Imogen had gazed upon the well known hand-writing of the loved and lost, till almost unable to proceed she deposited her treasures upon a table near, and remained for some moments buried in deep thought. But after awhile she again resumed her melancholy task, and the first letter that she grasped in her hand was one which had been written by her mother, who, dying when Imogen was an infant, had directed it to be given to her daughter when she attained the age of womanhood. It contained much gentle counsel, and a parent's blessing to her only child, and as Imogen now pressed it, her heart throbbed, and tears fell fast upon the pages.

Just then footsteps were heard approaching, and in another instant the door of the apartment was hastily unclosed, and Arthur Ellersly entered.

"What, in tears!" he exclaimed, approaching

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his wife and observing her emotion, which she tried in vain to hide—"pshaw! I have no patience with these soft-hearted mortals! Are you not happy, Imogen, that I so often find you weeping? Speak—what is the cause of your sorrow?"

But she did not reply—and Ellersly at that moment espying the letters which had so lately occupied his wife's attention, suddenly placed his hand upon them.

"Aha!" he said, in a tone of contempt, "what are these—a budget of old trumpery, as I live!" and pushing them scornfully aside, he turned away, and ere many more seconds had elapsed he left the room.

It was indeed beyond the power of Arthur Ellersly to understand his wife. Her sensitiveness on many points which *he* invariably passed over with a laugh, provoked and puzzled him, for his mind was far differently constituted from that of Imogen. He was a perfect man of the world, and neither understood nor cared for those tastes and pursuits which are only the accompaniments of a well cultivated mind. And with such a person could Imogen be happy? Ah, no! The languid step and pallid cheek told too sadly that the prediction of Grace Lester had been fulfilled—that eternal misery would be the portion of her friend if she wedded Arthur Ellersly.

During the first weeks of her married life, Imogen had endeavored to delude herself with many false hopes, but they faded quickly away, and all too soon she began to comprehend the character of her husband. "The enjoyment of mental endowments," it has been said, "can only be enhanced by sympathy and appreciation." But in vain did she look to Ellersly for either, and very soon she learned the utter uselessness of so doing. If she read to him beautiful selections from her favorite authors, instead of joining in her comments as she expected, he would pass them carelessly by, and immediately turn his attention to other matters, and not unfrequently when she had finished reading a passage to which she imagined he had listened with undivided attention—she would find him asleep. Then, too, if by chance he alighted upon any of the productions of her pen, they were invariably treated with ridicule—and all this gave her much pain. Ellersly had chosen his wife as Grace Lester warned her, not that he loved her, but because she was lovely, and that his ears might be gratified by hearing the world's encomium upon his choice. And to these truths Imogen early became familiar, but she never murmured at her lot, though she was far from happy, for she felt that she had made her choice and must abide by it. She knew too that in all that concerned her precipitate marriage she was not altogether free from fault. Still there was a void in her heart, for it yearned for something to love. With a strong effort she had banished as she deemed forever, the image of the only one for whom she had experienced a true affection, and never did she even allow her thoughts to dwell upon him.

At length the attentions which her little one required gave employment to her mind and food to her affections—and upon the innocent babe all the hopes of the mother were centered. And here again was her heart often pained by the callous indifference of Ellersly to his child. He never looked upon it but with a glance of aversion—and the sound of its voice was hateful to his ear.

Had she found happiness yet?

Passing over another twelvemonth, let us visit once more the fireside of our heroine, Imogen Ellersly. Again time has wrought its fearful changes, and we behold her now a childless mother. With an agonized gaze she had bent over the death-couch of her only child—she had marked the damp dews settle upon the fair brow, and had seen the fringed lashes closed over the dull, glazed eyes of her departed babe: and now that this sweet heart-flower had withered, her spirit was full of loneliness, and she knew not where to turn for earthly consolation. Since the death of her child her only refuge from painful thought was her pen, and the use of it became more than ever her delight. But even this relief was at length denied her; for Ellersly finding that her gaiety had entirely forsaken her, and that she avoided all society, and little comprehending the deep grief of a mother at the loss of her child—attributing her unvarying sadness to the pursuits in which she engaged, had desired her to abandon them entirely, and without a single murmur she submitted to his will, though that submission cost her indescribable anguish. And now having her mind continually unoccupied, her thoughts often reverted to the happiness of other days, and recollections of one whom she had too deeply loved came unbidden to her heart—and though she strove to forget the past, the "still, small voice" of memory would breathe forth its gentle tones.

One morning Imogen was sitting in her dressing-room, conversing with a young cousin who was spending the day with her, when the latter, after a short pause, said—

"Do you know, Imogen, that I take to myself great credit for having made a discovery lately; I have actually learned the cause of something that all the world is wondering at—namely—

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why that noble-looking Mr. Stanton has never been a candidate at the hymenial altar."

Imogen Ellersly became very pale, but she said in a low tone—

"And how came you to make such a discovery, Elsie?"

"Listen for a few moments, sweet coz, and I will tell you all about it. A few days ago I was taking a walk, when all at once remembering that I owed Mary Gilmore a call, I resolved to proceed immediately there. It was not many minutes ere I arrived at my destination—and when my summons at the bell was answered, the servant told me that my friend was out just then, but that she would be home in a few minutes—so I concluded to await her return. As I entered the parlor I saw Mr. Stanton, who you know is a near relation of the Gilmores', seated by the centre-table writing. He rose rather hastily when he saw me—and after pausing for an instant, with his usual politeness, to address to me a few words—left the room. Scarcely had he disappeared, when, looking down upon the carpet, I saw lying at my feet a sheet of paper. I stooped and picked it up. Not knowing to whom it belonged, I glanced over the pages, when suddenly the sight of your name attracted my attention, and I resolved to peruse it. It appeared to be a leaf from a journal, yet its contents were far different from those of any journal I had ever before read. It was evidently written by a gentleman, and dated more than three years back—and what was my surpise on finding it filled with the warmest expressions of love and admiration for you—yes, you—my own cousin, Imogen. In glowing terms the writer described his daily increasing pleasure in your society, and his admiration of your intellectual capacities, while he fervently declared that even if you possessed no pretensions to beauty, your talents alone could not fail to win his warmest regard.

"This part of the journal was written in a lively strain, but now followed a few lines evidently penned while the writer labored under deep depression of spirits, in which he announced his resolution of never again seeking your society, and said, with many expressions of sorrow, that though it would be difficult to forget you, you could henceforth be nothing to him. It seems the night before the party he had overheard you talking with some young ladies, to whom you expressed your determination of never accepting any but a wealthy suitor: and as he was by no means rich, he felt that to continue his visits would only be to subject himself to the pain and mortification of a refusal. And now, coz, having concluded this exceedingly sentimental journal, I of course became very curious to know the name of its author, and at length, after a very close examination, I espied a few words which were almost illegible, written in lead pencil, upon a remote corner of one of its pages. It was the name of 'Leonard Stanton.' Words could not describe my astonishment, for I had never even dreamed that you could be the cause of his coldness toward ladies generally. But just then I heard footsteps in the hall, and had barely time to conceal the manuscript in the folds of my shawl when Mary Gilmore entered. I returned home soon afterward, and not knowing what to do with the journal I had so unexpectedly become possessed of, not wishing to return it to the owner from consideration to his feelings, I committed it to the flames. And now, Imogen, is all this that I have related to you true? Can it really be possible that the high-souled Mr. Stanton once loved you, and that you gave him no encouragement?"

Silently and with an aching heart, Imogen Ellersly had listened to her cousin's narrative—yet she dared not give vent to the emotions that raged within her breast. But the color had entirely forsaken her cheek, and her sweet voice trembled perceptibly as she replied, "I can give you no explanation, Elsie—the subject is a very painful one."

"That is so like you—ever ready to sympathize with the sorrows of others, dear, kind-hearted Imogen!" exclaimed the young girl, casting her arms affectionately around the waist of her companion.

Little did Elsie Carlton imagine that she had that day planted a thorn in her cousin's heart, which could never be removed till death sent its healing balm, and the grave hushed her to eternal rest.

About ten days after the visit of Elsie Carlton to her cousin, Grace Lester, now a happy wife and mother, received a message from Imogen Ellersly, announcing that she was seriously indisposed, and desiring to see her immediately. Much alarmed, Grace hastened without delay to the residence of her friend.

Imogen was reclining upon her couch. A faint smile played about her mouth as Grace entered the apartment, but when, as the latter approached, she endeavored to rise from her recumbent position, she felt herself unable to do so, and her head drooped again languidly upon the pillow. It was more than a week since Grace Lester (for so we still love to call her) had beheld her friend, and now as she looked once more upon her face she was startled at the change that had taken place there. Beautiful,

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oh! very beautiful was Imogen Ellersly still—but it was a spiritual loveliness that terrified while it charmed the beholder.

"Grace, dearest Grace," she murmured, feebly and tremulously, as she clasped the hand of that beloved one within her own, "I have summoned you here that I may speak a few words with you before I die."

"Before you die! Imogen, darling, do not talk thus," and Grace burst into tears as she spoke.

"Yes, Grace—they do not deem that I am so ill—but I know that I shall not be long here."

"And your husband—where is he?" faltered her companion, gazing anxiously into that pale, sweet face.

"He is from home: he was obliged to leave the city to settle some business affairs a week since, and will probably be absent several days longer." And as Imogen spoke she turned away her head.

"Grace," she continued, after a lengthened pause, "there is one subject upon which I would fain speak to you ere death sets its seal upon my lips. I have never alluded to it before, because—because—there was circumstances that forbade it. But now that I feel myself to be dying, I must do as my heart prompts, and if I err you will surely excuse your poor friend. Grace, three years ago you warned me that I need not expect happiness if I married Arthur Ellersly, and I valued not your counsel: but now while I confess to you that I have reaped the fruits of my own wilfulness, I would have you forgive me for neglecting the advice you so kindly gave." She ceased, and gazed for a moment earnestly into the countenance of her companion, as if awaiting an answer: but Grace was unable to reply—it was the first time Imogen had ever reverted to her unhappy marriage—she could only bow her head and weep.

"I have done wrong, very wrong," at length resumed Imogen, "if I had followed your counsel I should have been a happy wife—yes, the wife of Leonard Stanton. You start, dear Grace, and well you may—for till a week since even I deemed that he had never cared for me. But an accident revealed the truth: yes, Grace, *he* loved me. A slight error on his part was the cause of his coldness—an error which my subsequent conduct seemed to confirm. He overheard me say in jest that I sought wealth in a husband, and believed that such was really my object. But had I only remained single as you advised, had I never encouraged the attentions of Arthur Ellersly, Stanton would after awhile have discovered his mistake, and all would have been well with us."

"Would that you had done so, Imogen," replied Grace, mournfully. She could say no more, for again the burning tears streamed from her eyes. Imogen continued—

"I might have been at least *contented* with my lot, had the husband I had chosen loved me and sought my affection in return. But it was far otherwise. Ellersly never looked for happiness at home. He was constantly mixing with society, and often reproached me, because from disinclination, I did not follow his example. While I possessed my babe I enjoyed a brief period of happiness, but even this was disturbed by one thought. My husband cared naught for his child—nay, I am quite sure he hated it—yes, hated that innocent babe. I could not bear to see him approach my treasure—he would cast such cold glances upon its face; and once as he turned away from it I almost thought I heard him mutter a curse. Oh! Grace, it was very fearful for a mother's heart to brook—and yet I have been rightly punished." And as Imogen ceased speaking, she covered her face with her thin, white hands, while her slight frame trembled with uncontrollable emotion.

"Say no more at present, dearest," said Grace, soothingly—"try to banish these sad thoughts, and hope for happier days."

"Ah! yes—but not upon earth."

A few minutes afterward she fell into a light slumber, and for nearly an hour Grace watched by the bedside of her friend. When at length Imogen awoke she clasped her hands together, and remained for some moments motionless, while her lips moved as though breathing forth a prayer. Suddenly requesting her companion to draw nearer, she murmured softly—

"I am about to leave you—give me one farewell kiss, dearest Grace—and bid them lay me beside my babe."

Grace bent tearfully down and pressed her lips upon the brow of her dying friend; and when she again raised her head the death-pallor had stolen over the cheek of Imogen, and her eyes were closed in the slumber that knows no waking.

Reader! if you would marry for wealth, think of Imogen Ellersly.

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THE QUARREL.

A SKETCH FROM REAL LIFE.

It was a pleasant day in spring, and Broadway presented a perfect tide of human beings. A crowd of carriages at the door of the Astor House announced that an unusual influx of visiters, even for that colossal hotel, had arrived. In fact the Great Western was just in.

Suddenly one of the throng of passengers on the side walk, stopped just in front of a gentleman who was descending from a chaise at the door of the Astor. The eyes of the two persons met: there was a glance of mutual enquiry; and then each rushed into the others arms.

"Five years since you went abroad—what an age!" said one.

"It seems a long time to you—does it?" said the other, with a faint smile. "Ah! I wish it did to me."

Charles Elwyn, the speaker, had gone abroad in consequence of a disappointment in his affections. He had loved, and loved truly one, who, after giving him encouragement, laughed when he came to declare his passion. "Oh! I never thought of love," she said. "*I* marry! Bless me, I can't have my own way enough even now —what should I do if married and a slave, as all married women are?"

Light-hearted and gay she little dreamed the effect her words would have on her ardent and imaginative lover. Indeed, in her secret soul, Mary Beauvoir returned his affection; but, like too many of her sex, she had been taught to believe it unmaidenly to allow a suitor to discover her weakness until after he had wooed long and been often repulsed. We will not deny that she enjoyed a pleasure in the contemplation of what she thought a little harmless coquetry toward her lover: so, she not only rejected him in a tone of jest, but pretended to be interested in one of his rivals.

Charles Elwyn could ill brook this. He loved too sincerely, and was of a nature too earnest to stand by and see another preferred to himself. He sailed for Europe in consequence, hoping by a change of scene, to drive Mary from his mind. But in this he was unsuccessful. Some natures can conquer an unfortunate attachment: his was not such; and, at the end of five years, he returned to America hopeless, yet proud. Never would he, he vowed, suffer any one to suspect his weakness. He would meet Mary—she was now married he supposed—and coldly compliment her.

How had Mary received his departure? She heard of his intention before he sailed, but at first could not believe it: when, however, she became convinced of the truth, she bitterly repented her conduct. She even thought of calling him back to her side. But her pride shrank from this.

"No! I cannot—I dare not," she exclaimed. "He will turn from me. Oh! that I had never, never acted so foolishly."

He sailed for Europe, and she was laid on a sick bed, from which she did not rise for months. But misfortune proved beneficial to her, in one respect at least: it chastened and elevated her character. She was no longer the giddy, thoughtless child; but the matured and considerate woman.

The day of Charles Elwyn's return, his friend dined with him in one of the private parlors of the Astor House. They had conversed some time, when Mr. Sandford observed.

"By the bye you must see Mary Beauvoir soon. She has grown very beautiful." And he paused.

"I have not heard from the family for years," said Elwyn at length, feeling that his companion expected some reply.

"Then you know nothing of her?—push us some of the almonds—why, my dear fellow, she is irresistible. But she is different from what she used to be; her beauty is softer, though not so showy, and whereas she once would flirt a little—mind, only a little, for she is a great favorite of mine—she now goes by the name of the cold beauty. A married man, like myself, can speak thus warmly, you know, without fear of having his heart called in as the bribe of his head. And do you know that my wife suspects you of having worked the reformation?" Elwyn started, and was almost thrown off his guard— "for it began immediately after a long illness, that happened a few weeks after you sailed."

Elwyn was completely bewildered. He had now for the first time heard of Mary's sickness. His eye wandered from that of his companion, and he felt his cheek flushing in despite of himself. He covered his embarrassment, however, by rising. His companion continued,

"And now, Elwyn, let us stroll down Broadway, for, to tell the truth, I promised my wife to bring you home with me. Besides, Mary is there, and I've no doubt," he continued, jocularly, "you are dying to meet her."

Elwyn could not answer; but he followed his friend into the street, conscious that Mary and he must meet, and feeling that the sooner it was over the better. His companion, during their walk, ran on in his usual gay style, but Elwyn scarcely heard a word that was said. His thoughts were full of Mary. Had she indeed become cold to all other men from love to

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himself? Strange and yet delicious thoughts whirled through his mind, and he woke only from his abstraction on finding himself in Sandford's drawing-room, and in the presence of Mary.

Mary was on a visit to Mrs. Sandford, and did not know of Elwyn's intended coming until a few minutes before he made his appearance. Devotedly as she loved Elwyn, she would have given worlds to escape the interview; but retreat was impossible, without exposing the long treasured secret of her heart. She nerved herself, accordingly, for the meeting, and succeeded in assuming a sufficiently composed demeanor to greet him without betraying her agitation. He exchanged the common compliments of the occasion with her, and then took a seat by Mrs. Sanford, who had been one of his old friends. Mary felt the neglect; she saw he did not love her. That night she wept bitter tears of anguish.

"And yet I cannot blame him. Oh, no!" she exclaimed, "it is all my own fault. He once loved me, and I heartlessly flung that affection from me which I would give worlds now to win. But I must dry these tears; I must not betray myself. We shall meet daily, for he cannot help coming here, and to shorten my visit would lead to suspicions. I must, therefore, school myself to disguise the secret of my heart."

And Elwyn did come daily, and although his conversation was chiefly devoted to Mrs. Sandford, he neither seemed to seek nor to avoid Mary. Now and then he found himself in conversation with her, and he thought of old times. But the memory of their last interview came across him at such moments like a blight.

"How wonderfully Elwyn has improved since his travels," said Mrs. Sanford one morning, as she and Mary sat *tete-a-tete*, sewing; "and do you know," continued she, looking archly at her companion, "that I deem myself indebted to you for his charming visits?"

Mary felt the blood mounting to her brow, and she stooped to pick out a stitch.

"Oh! you are always jesting, Anne; you know it is not so."

"We shall see. I prophesy that this afternoon, when we go to the Apollo, he will escort you, and leave Miss Thornbury to Sandford's nephew."

Mary's heart beat so fast she could scarcely answer, but she managed to reply.

"Don't, my dear Mrs. Sanford, don't tease one this way. You know, indeed you know, Elwyn cares nothing for me," and she felt how great a relief would have been a flood of tears, could she have indulged in them.

Mrs. Sanford smiled archly, and said no more.

The afternoon came. The little company were assembled in the drawing-room. Elwyn entered just as the last moment had come, and when the ladies were rising to go. Mary was almost hidden in one corner, so fearful was she of attracting the raillery of Mrs. Sanford, by placing herself near the entrance, and in Elwyn's way. Her very sensitiveness produced the effect she wished to avoid. The gentlemen naturally sought partners nearest them, and for a moment she was left almost alone. She thought she would have fainted when she saw Elwyn cross the room and offer to be her escort.

They proceeded to the exhibition. For the first time for years, Elwyn's arm upheld that of Mary. At first both were embarrassed; but each made an effort, and they soon glided into conversation on indifferent subjects. What a relief it was to Mary that night, to think she had been alone, as it were, with Elwyn without being treated with neglect.

From that day the visits of Elwyn to Mrs. Sandford's increased in frequency, yet there was nothing marked in his attentions to Mary. Indeed, he still continued to converse chiefly with his friend's wife, though he did not openly avoid her guest. Mary grew more and more tremblingly alive to his presence, and, at times, when she would detect his eye bent on her, half sadly, half abstractedly, her heart would flutter wildly, and a delicious hope would momently shoot across her mind; but soon to fade as quickly.

One morning, Elwyn entered the drawing-room, and found her alone. She was untangling a skein of silk. She arose, and said, with some embarrassment,

"Mrs. Sandford is up stairs; I will ring for her."

"Not for the world, if she is in any way engaged. I can wait her pleasure."

There was a silence of some minutes. Mary could scarcely breathe: she knew not what to say. Her fingers refused to peform their duty, and her skein of silk become more and more entangled.

"Shall I help you?" said Elwyn, approaching her. "My patience used to be a proverb with you."

Mary could not trust herself to answer, for her fingers were actually trembling with agitation. She felt she could have sunk into the floor. She proffered the silk without looking up. Elwyn took hold of one end while she retained the other. Neither spoke; but Mary's bosom heaved tumultuously, while Elwyn felt his heart in his throat. At length, in mutually

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untangling the skein, their hands met. The touch thrilled them like lightning. Elwyn almost unconsciously retained the hand of Mary in his own. She trembled violently.

"Mary!" he said.

She looked half doubtingly, half timidly up.

"Mary, we love each other—do we not?"

There was no answer, but as he pressed the fingers lying passively in his grasp, the pressure was gently returned, and, bursting into tears, Mary fell upon his bosom.

And Elwyn and Mary have been wedded for years, but their honey-moon still continues, for they have not yet quarrelled. P. H. S.

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THE LORD OF ARUSTEIN.

FROM THE GERMAN.

Not far from the terrible mountain of the Brocken, and in the very centre of the hill of the Hartz, is seen a level and verdant strip of land, seeming, like an emerald gem set, by the hand of nature, amid the savage heights around. It is not far from the little town of Aschersleben, the inhabitants of which still love to tell the following legend.

Ages ago the blooming daughters of the neighboring burghers were in the habit of assembling on a summer's evening, when the weather was fine, to enjoy one another's society in this enchanting vale; during which the dance was never forgotten. Besides, it was a custom for all young brides on the day before their nuptials, to meet here the playmates of their infant years, whose circle they were about to quit forever, and to join in a parting dance, along with the bordering tenants of the well known scene.

A party happened to have met here, previous to a wedding, and were on the point of escorting home their rich and beautiful betrothed, late on a clear moonlight night, with all the mirthful triumph of dancing, innocent gaiety, and song. Not the whole of the guests, however, were destined to reach their home. Two of the most beautiful maidens disappeared; and, notwithstanding the most active exertions on the part of their friends and relatives, no trace of them could be discovered; their seats remained that night vacant in the domestic circle, and within a few hours all was confusion; no less among the parents than in the surrounding abodes. Many weeping eyes were kept awake; their lovers swore the deadliest revenge; for they found reason to suspect that under the veil of night a grievous wrong had been premeditated, and perhaps accomplished, which left them nothing but the hope of revenge.

And in part their fears were well grounded. Some domestics in the service of the chief of Arustein, becoming acquainted with the hour of the intended festival, had the audacity, for the purpose of amusing themselves and indulging their master's propensities, to lie concealed in an adjacent thicket. Under cover of the night, they succeeded in seizing upon two of the dancers, who happening to stray from their companions, had approached nearest to them, and they were instantly conveyed, amid shouts of surrounding revelry and rejoicings, unheard, into the neighboring Hartz mountains, until a fit time should occur to convey them to their ultimate destination in Raubberg.

Scarcely had the sun streaked the horizon on the following morning, when a number of the citizens, whose anxiety had kept them awake, were seen assembled before their doors, in order to advise with the suffering parents on the best measures to be adopted. Soon they learned that a secret messenger who had been despatched upon some private affair, and was returning, ere day-break, over the mountains, had heard sufficient to prove the forcible abduction of the young women, although he had lost the track of the robbers among the hills. There was reason, however, to conclude that they must reside somewhere upon the Arustein; but their haunts were still a secret. The magistrate, upon this, being made acquainted with the facts, instantly solicited a meeting of the relatives of the abducted parties, along with all the elders of the place, while they attempted in the meantime to preserve calmness and moderation in the minds of the incensed citizens. The chief part of the assembly were for instantly arming the whole of the inhabitants capable of bearing arms, in order, if possible, to surprise and destroy the hated and notorious castle of Arustein, which, they said, ought long since to have been levelled with the ground. But, besides the uncertainty of the information received, it was justly remarked by the magistrates who presided, that it would require months of open and decided hostility to capture so powerful and well-provisioned a castle as that of Raubberg, whence the formidable enemy made his depredations; while, moreover, the present case called for instant redress.

At length, after a long and stormy discussion of the most efficacious means for obtaining it, during which the heads of the more bold and indignant had leisure to grow cooler, it was agreed to adopt the last suggestion of one of the oldest magistrates, who explained to the council the superior opinion he entertained of a *ruse de guerre*, by which he trusted that the freedom of the abducted party would be more speedily accomplished.

In the first place every one must return quietly back to his own house, concealing his feelings of indignation and revenge, as well as he could. Then, just as if nothing extraordinary had occurred at the late festival—as if the absence of none of the party had been noticed, or that their return was quietly expected, another nuptial evening should be as soon as possible announced, with even more bustle and splendor than the former; all their neighbors to be invited to the dance, and information sent by trusty messengers to the adjacent villages around.

Accordingly, these same tidings reached the

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ears of the lord of Arustein, who, on receiving an invitation along with his knights and esquires, loudly ridiculed the stupidity of the poor citizens, who thus actually threw their daughters in his way. Then, amidst oaths and laughter, a still more extended incursion than the former was determined upon, the whole of the party present declaring that they would, this time, each and every one seize on his individual prey, after the close of the dance.

About twilight on the appointed day, the meadow was seen covered with beautiful groups of dancers; yet, with all this, no virgins this day trod the scene—they were safe in their parental mansions. It was the stout citizens, and next to them their eldest boys, who were arrayed in women's attire, with newly sharpened weapons concealed under their clothes, all intent upon avenging the honor of their daughters—their sisters, or their betrothed, and forever in future to secure it. They began the dance with sounds of revelry and mirth, yet somewhat subdued to tones of womanhood, while their hearts throbbed for vengeance, until the approach of midnight, when their trusty scouts brought word of the yet near and nearer advance of the lord of Arustein, approaching softly toward the spot.

Now the dancing party seems to break up—concluding with the old national figures, and singing, and apparently drawing homeward. But, behold! the next moment the chief of Arustein burst into the midst of them, followed by his knights and pages, on horseback and on foot, all eager to join in the pursuit, of which they vainly hoped that their former depredation was only a poor specimen.

They let him advance; and the chief no sooner found himself in the midst of the dancers, than he threw himself from his steed in order to enjoy the pleasure and applause of bearing off the intended bride with his own hands. But what was the feeling he experienced, when, as with a thundering voice and a laugh of joy he claimed the bride for himself, the bright steel flashed in his eyes, and smote his outstretched arm, before he could draw it back, quite through and through. Smarting with pain, and uttering curses of revenge, he started back to regain his steed. But ten strong arms were about him; he felt himself pinioned hand and foot and neck, as if chains of iron girt him round. Some of the knights and pages who hastened with threats to his assistance, were, after a short struggle, overpowered and secured; most of them, however, escaped, with cries of terror and surprise, and wounded with sabres or with stones.

The chief culprit, however, was carried with shouts of triumph into the city. There the lord of Arustein was thrown forthwith into a large, solitary dungeon, and there he confessed, on beholding the preparations for his approaching execution, the deeds he had perpetrated and further intended to accomplish. The young ladies were, at his own command, immediately delivered to their friends; in consequence of which, after paying a heavy penalty, and taking a memorable oath never to commit any offence against the city or its inhabitants, he was released from his chains. But these chains, in which he for months languished, are still preserved, and are now to be seen in the town-house at Aschersleben.

E. H. M.

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THREE WAYS OF MANAGING A HUSBAND.

BY MARY ALESCINA SMITH.

To those who have never tried the experiment, the management of a husband may seem a very easy matter. I thought so once, but a few years' hard experience has compelled me to change my mind. When I married Mr. Smith, which was about ten years ago, I was not altogether blind to his faults and peculiarities; but then he had so many solid virtues that these were viewed as minor considerations. Besides, I flattered myself that it would be the easiest thing in the world to correct what was not exactly to my taste. It is no matter of especial wonder that I should have erred in this, for Mr. Smith, while a lover, really appeared to have no will of his own, and no thought of himself. It was only necessary for me to express a wish, and it was gratified.

I soon found, much to my disappointment, that there is a marked difference between a husband and a lover; it was at least so in the case of Mr. Smith, and observation, since I have had my eyes open, satisfies me that it is so in most cases. I must own, in justice to all parties, however, that this difference is made more apparent by a want of knowledge, on the other side, in regard to the difference between the relation of a wife and a sweetheart—between the wooed and the won.

There were a good many little things in Mr. Smith which I had noticed before marriage, that I made up my mind to correct as soon as I had an opportunity to apply the proper means. He had a fashion of saying "Miss" for "Mrs.," as "Miss Jones" and "Miss Peters" for "Mrs. Jones" and "Mrs. Peters." This sounded exceedingly vulgar to my ears, and I waited almost impatiently for the time to come when I could use the perogative of a wife for its correction. He had an ungraceful way of lounging in his chair and half reclining on the sofa, even in company, that was terrible. It made me uneasy from head to foot. Then he said, "I *shew* it to him" for "I *showed* it to him,"—"*often*" for "oft'n"—and "*obleeged*" for "obliged." Besides these there were sundry other things that worried me not a little. But I consoled myself with the reflection that when I became Mrs. Smith all these little matters would vanish like frost in the sunshine. I was, also, doomed to be mistaken; but let me give my experience for the benefit of those who are to come after me.

We had been married just ten days, and I had begun to feel that I was really a wife, and had a right to say and do a little as I pleased, when Mr. Smith said to me as we sat quite lover-like on the sofa in the evening.

"I met Miss Williams as I came home this evening——"

"For mercy's sake, Mr. Smith! don't say *Miss* when you speak of a married woman. It is excessively vulgar." I was not aware that I had spoken in a very offensive way, but I noticed an instant change in Mr. Smith. He replied with some dignity of tone and manner.

"I ask your pardon, madam; but I didn't say *Miss*. I am not quite so ignorant as all that comes to."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Smith, but you did say it," I replied, quite astonished at this unexpected denial.

"Excuse me for saying that you are in error." he returned, drawing himself up. "I never say Miss for Mrs."

"Why Mr. Smith! You always say it. I have noticed it a hundred times. I believe I can hear pretty correctly."

"In this instance you certainly have not."

Mr. Smith was growing warm, and I felt the blood rushing to my face. A rather tart reply was on my lips, but I bit them hard and succeeded in keeping them closed.

A deep silence followed. In a little while Mr. Smith took up a newspaper and commenced reading, and I found some relief for a heavy pressure that was upon my bosom, in the employment of hem-stitching a fine pocket-handkerchief.

And this was the return I had met for a kind attempt to correct a mistake of my husband's, that made him liable to ridicule on the charge of vulgarity! And to deny, too, that he said "*Miss*," when I had been worried about it for more than a year. It was too bad!

After this Mr. Smith was very particular in saying, when he spoke of a married woman to me, *Misses*. The emphasis on the second syllable was much too strongly marked to be pleasant on my ears. I was terribly afraid he would say "*Mistress*," thus going off into the opposite extreme of vulgarity.

This first attempt to put my husband straight had certainly not been a very pleasant one. He had shown, unexpectedly to me, a humor that could by no means be called amiable; and by which I was both grieved and astonished. I made up my mind that I would be very careful in future how I tried my hand at reforming him. But his oft repeated "he *shew* it to me," and "*obleeged*," soon fretted me so sorely that I was forced to come down upon him again, which I did at a time when I felt more than usually annoyed. I cannot remember now precisely what I said to him, but I know that I put him into an

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ill-humor, and that it was cloudy weather in the house for a week, although the sun shone brightly enough out of doors. His "*shew it to me*," and "*obleeged*," were, however, among the things that had been after that. So much was gained; although there were times when I half suspected that I had lost more than I had gained. But I persevered, and, every now and then, when I got "worked up" about something, administered the rod of correction.

Gradually I could see that my husband was changing, and, as I felt, for the worse. Scarcely a year had passed before he would get into a pet if I said the least word to him. He couldn't bear anything from me. This seemed very unreasonable, and caused me not only to sigh, but to shed many a tear over his perverseness. From the thoughtful, ever considerate, self-sacrificing lover, he had come to be disregardful of my wishes, careless of my comfort, and indifferent to my society. Still I felt by no means inclined to give him up; was by no means disposed to let him have his own way. It was clear to my mind that I had rights as well as he had; and I possessed resolution enough to be ready to maintain them. His self-will and indifference to my wishes roused in me a bitter and contentious spirit; and, in an evil hour, I determined that I would make a struggle for the mastery. An opportunity was not long delayed. The Philharmonic Society had announced one of its splendid concerts. A lady friend, who had frequently attended these concerts, called in to see me, and, by what she said, filled me with a desire to enjoy the fine musical treat that had been announced for that very evening.

When Mr. Smith came home at dinner he said, before I had time to mention the concert—

"Mary I've taken a fancy to go and see Fanny Ellsler to-night, and as there will be no chance of getting a good seat this afternoon, I took the precaution to secure tickets as I came home to dinner. I would have sent the porter with a note to know whether there was anything to prevent your going to-night, but he has been out all the morning, and I concluded that, even if there should be some slight impediment in the way, you could easily set it aside."

Now this I thought too much. To go and buy tickets to see Fanny Ellsler dance, and take it for granted that I would lay everything aside to go, when I had set my heart on attending the Philharmonic Concert!

"You are a strange man, Mr. Smith," I said. "You ought to know that I don't care a fig about seeing Fanny Ellsler. I don't relish such kind of performances. You at least might have waited until you come home to dinner and asked the question. I don't believe a word about the good seats all being taken this morning. But its just like you! To go and see this dancer toss her feet about was a thing you had made up your mind to do, and I was to go along whether I liked it or not."

"You talk in rather a strange way, Mrs. Smith," said my husband, evidently offended.

"I don't see that I do," replied I, warming. "The fact is, Mr. Smith, you seem to take it for granted that I am nobody. Here I've been making all my calculations to go to the Philharmonic to-night, and you come home with tickets for the theatre. But I can tell you plainly that I am *not* going to see Fanny Ellsler, and that I *am* going to the Philharmonic."

This was taking a stand that I had never taken before. In most of my efforts to make my husband go my way, he had succeeded in making me go his way. This always chafed me dreadfully. I fretted and scolded, and "all that sort of thing," but it was no use, I could not manage him. The direct issue of "I wont" and "I will" had not yet been made, and I was sometime in coming to the resolution to have a struggle, fiercer than ever for the ascendancy. I fondly believed that for peace sake he would not stand firm if he saw me resolute. Under this view of the case I made the open averment that I would not go to the theatre. I expected that a scene would follow, but I was mistaken. Mr. Smith did, indeed, open his eyes a little wider, but he said nothing.

Just then the bell announced that dinner was on the table. Mr. Smith arose and led the way to the diner-room with a firm step. Before we were married he wouldn't have dreamed of thus preceding me! I was fretted at this little act. It indicated too plainly what was in the man.

Dinner passed in silence. I forced myself to eat that I might appear unconcerned. On rising from the table, Mr. Smith left the house without saying a word.

You may suppose I didn't feel very comfortable during the afternoon. I had taken my stand, and my intention was to maintain it to the last. That Mr. Smith would yield I had no doubt at first. But as evening approached, and the trial-time drew near, I had some misgivings.

Mr. Smith came home early.

"Mary," he said, in his usual pleasant way, "I have ordered a carriage to be here at half past seven. We mustn't leave home later, as the curtain rises at eight."

"What curtain rises? Where do you think of going?"

"To see Fanny Ellsler of course. I mentioned to you at dinner time that I had tickets."

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This was said very calmly.

"And I told you at dinner time that I was going to the Philharmonic and not to see this dancer." I tried to appear as composed as he was, but failed in the attempt altogether.

"You were aware that I had tickets for the theatre before you said that," was the cold answer he made.

"Of course I was."

"Very well, Mary. You can do as you like. The carriage will be here at half past seven. If you are then ready to go to the theatre, I shall be happy to have your company." And my husband, after saying this with a most unruffled manner, politely bowed and retired to the parlor.

I was on fire. But I had no thought of yielding.

At half past seven I was ready. I heard the carriage drive up to the door and the bell ring.

"Mary," called my husband at the bottom of the stair-case, in a cheerful tone, "are you ready?"

"Ready to go where?" I asked on descending.

"To the theatre."

"I am ready for the concert," I answered in as composed a voice as I could assume.

"*I* am not going to the concert to-night, Mrs. Smith. I thought you understood that," firmly replied my husband. "I am going to see Fanny Ellsler. If you will go with me, I shall be very happy to have your company. If not I must go alone."

"And I am going to the Philharmonic. I thought you understood that," I replied, with equal resolution.

"Oh! very well," he said, not seeming to be at all disturbed. "Then you can use the carriage at the door. I will walk to the theatre."

Saying this, Mr. Smith turned from me deliberately and walked away. I heard him tell the driver of the carriage to take me to the Musical Fund Hall; then I heard the street door close, and then I heard my husband's footsteps on the pavement as he left the house. Without hesitating a moment for reflection, I followed to the door, entered the carriage, and ordered the man to drive me—where? I had no ticket for the concert; nor could I go alone!

"To the Musical Fund Hall, I believe, madam," he said, standing with his fingers touching the rim of his hat.

I tried to think what I should do. To be conquered was hard. And it was clear that I could not go alone.

"No," I replied, grasping hold of the first suggestion that came to my mind. "Drive me to No. — Walnut street."

I had directed him to the house of my sister, where I thought I would stay until after eleven o'clock, and then return home, leaving my husband to infer that I had been to the concert. But long before I had reached my sister's house I felt so miserable that I deemed it best to call out of the window to the driver, and direct him to return. On arriving at home, some twenty minutes after I had left it, I went up to my chamber, and there had a hearty crying spell to myself. I don't know that I ever felt so bad before in my life. I had utterly failed in this last vigorous contest with my husband, who had come off perfectly victorious. Many bitter things did I write against him in my heart, and largely did I magnify his faults. I believe I thought over everything that occurred since we were married, and selected therefrom whatever could justify the conclusion that he was a self-willed, overbearing, unfeeling man, and did not entertain for me a particle of affection.

It was clear that I had not been able to manage my spouse; determined as I had been to correct all his faults, and make him one of the best, most conciliating, and loving of husbands, with whom my wish would be law. Still I could not think of giving up. The thought of being reduced to a tame, submissive wife, who could hardly call her soul her own, was not for a moment to be entertained. On reflection it occurred to me that I had, probably, taken the wrong method with my husband. There was a touch of stubbornness in his nature that had arrayed itself against my too earnest efforts to bend him to my will. A better way occurred. I had heard it said by some one, or had read it somewhere, that no man was proof against a woman's tears.

On the present occasion I certainly felt much more like crying than laughing, and so it was no hard matter, I can honestly aver, to appear bathed in tears on my husband's return between eleven and twelve o'clock from the theatre. I cried from vexation as much as from any other feeling.

When Mr. Smith came up into the chamber where I lay, I greeted his presence with half a dozen running sobs, which he answered by whistling the "Craccovienne!" I continued to sob, and he continued to whistle for the next ten minutes. By that time he was ready to get into bed, which he did quite leisurely, and laid himself down upon his pillow with an expression of satisfaction. Still I sobbed on, thinking that every sighing breath I drew, was, in spite of his seeming indifference, a pang to his heart. But from this fond delusion, a heavily drawn breath, that was almost a snore, aroused me. I raised up and looked over at the man—he was sound asleep!

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A good, hearty cry to myself was all the satisfaction I had, and then I went to sleep. On the next morning I met Mr. Smith at the breakfast table with red eyes and a sad countenance. But he did not seem to notice either.

"I hope you enjoyed yourself at the concert last night," he said. "I was delighted at the theatre. Fanny danced divinely. Her's is truly the poetry of motion."

Now this was too much! I will leave it to any reader—any female reader I mean—whether this was not too much. I burst into a flood of tears and immediately withdrew, leaving my husband to eat his breakfast alone. He sat the usual time, which provoked me exceedingly. If he had jumped up from the table and left the house I would have felt that I had made some impression upon him. But to take things in this calm way! What had I gained? Nothing as I could see. After breakfast Mr. Smith came up to the chamber, and seeing my face buried in a pillow weeping bitterly—I had increased the flow of tears on hearing him ascending the stairs —said in a low voice—

"Are you not well, Mary?"

I made no answer, but continued to weep. Mr. Smith stood for the space of about a minute, but asked no further question. Then, without uttering a word, he retired from the chamber, and in a little while after I heard him leave the house. I cried now in good earnest. It was plain that my husband had no feeling; that he did not care whether I was pleased or sad. But I determined to give him a fair trial. If I failed in this new way what was I to do? The thought of becoming the passive slave of a domestic tyrant was dreadful. I felt that I could not live in such a state. When Mr. Smith came home at dinner time I was in my chamber, ready prepared for a gush of tears. As he opened the door I looked up with streaming eyes, and then hid my face in a pillow.

"Mary," he said, with much kindness in his voice, "what ails you? Are you sick?" he laid his hand upon mine as he spoke.

But I did not reply. I meant to punish him well for what he had done as a lesson for the future. I next expected him to draw his arm around me, and be very tender and sympathizing in his words and tones. But no such thing! He quietly withdrew the hand he had placed upon mine; and stood by me I could feel, though not see, in a cold, erect attitude.

"Are you not well, Mary?" he asked again.

I was still silent. A little while after I heard him moving across the floor, and then the chamber door shut. I was once more alone.

When the bell rung for dinner, I felt half sorry that I had commenced this new mode of managing my husband, but as I had begun I was determined to go through with it. "He'll at least take care how he acts in the future," I said. I did not leave my chamber to join my husband at the dinner table. He sat his usual time, as I could tell by the ringing of the bell for the servant to change the plates and bring in the dessert. I was exceedingly fretted; and more so by his returning to his business without calling up to see me, and making another effort to dispel my grief.

For three days I tried this experiment upon my husband, who bore it with the unflinching heroism of a martyr. I was forced, at last, to come to, but I was by no means satisfied that my new mode was a failure. For all Mr. Smith's assumed indifference, I knew that he had been troubled at heart, and I was pretty well satisfied that he would think twice before provoking me to another essay of tears. Upon the whole, I felt pretty sure that I had discovered the means of doing with him as I pleased.

A few weeks of sunshine passed—I must own that the sun did not look so bright, nor feel so warm as it had done in former times—and then our wills came once more into collision. But my tears fell upon a rock. I could not see that they made the least perceptible impression. Mr. Smith had his own way, and I cried about it until I got tired of that sport, and in very weariness gave over. For the space of a whole year I stood upon tears as my last defensible position. Sometimes I didn't smile for weeks. But my husband maintained his ground like a hero.

At last I gave up in despair. Pride, self-will, anger—all were conquered. I was a weak woman in the hands of a strong-minded man. If I could not love him as I wished to love him, I could at least obey. In nothing did I now oppose him, either by resolute words or tears. If he expressed a wish, whether to me agreeable or not, I acquiesced.

One day, not long after this change in my conduct toward my husband—he said to me.

"I rather think, Mary, we will spend a couple of weeks at Brandywine Springs instead of going to Cape May this season."

I replied. "Very well, dear;" although I had set my heart on going to the Capes. My sister and her husband, and a number of my friends were going down, and I had anticipated a good deal of pleasure. I did not know of a single person who was going to the Brandywine Springs. But what was the use of entering into a contest with my husband. He would come off the conqueror spite of angry words or ineffectual tears.

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"The Springs are so much more quiet than the Capes," said my husband.

"Yes," I remarked, "there is less gay company there."

"Don't you think you will enjoy yourself as well there as at the Capes?"

Now this was a good deal for my husband to say. I hardly knew what to make of it.

"If you prefer going there, dear, let us go by all means," I answered. I was not affecting anything, but was in earnest in what I said.

Mr. Smith looked into my face for some moments, and with unusual affection I thought.

"Mary," he said, "if you think the time will pass more pleasantly to you at the Capes, let us go there by all means."

"My sister Jane is going to the Capes," I remarked, with some little hesitation; "and so is Mrs. L—— and Mrs. D——, and a good many more of our friends. I did think that I would enjoy myself there this season very much. But I have no doubt I shall find pleasant society at the Springs."

"We will go to the Capes," said my husband, promptly and cheerfully.

"No," said I, emulous now for the first time in a new cause. "I am sure the time will pass agreeably enough at the Springs. And as you evidently prefer going there, we will let the Capes pass for this year.

"To the Capes, Mary, and nowhere else," replied my husband, in the very best of humors. "I am sure you will enjoy yourself far better there. I did not know your sister was going."

And to the Capes we went, and I did enjoy myself excellently well. As for my husband, I never saw him in a better state of mind. To me he was more like a lover than a husband. No, I will not say that either, for I can't admit that a husband may not be as kind and affectionate as a lover; for he can and will be if managed rightly, and a great deal more really so. Whenever I expressed a wish it appeared to give him pleasure to gratify it. Seeing this, instead of suffering myself to be the mere recipient of kind attentions, I began to vie with him in the sacrifice of selfish wishes and feelings.

It is wonderful how all was changed after this. There were no more struggles on my part to manage my husband, and yet I generally had things my own way. Before I could not turn him to the right nor the left, though I strove to do so with my utmost strength. Now I held him only with a silken fetter, and guided him without really intending to do so in almost any direction.

Several years have passed since that ever-to-be-remembered, happy visit to Cape May. Not once since have I attempted any management of my husband, and yet it is a rare thing that my wish is not, as it used to be before we were married, his law. It is wonderful too how he has improved. I am sure he is not the same man that he was five years ago. But perhaps I see with different eyes. At any rate I am not the same woman; or, if the same, very unlike what I then was.

So much, Mr. Editor, for my efforts to manage a husband. Of the three ways so faithfully tried your fair readers will be at no loss to determine which is best. I make these honest confessions for the good of my sex. My husband, Mr. John Smith, will be no little surprised if this history should meet his eye, and it is most likely to do so, for we take your magazine. But I have no idea that it will interrupt the present harmonious relations existing between us, but rather tend to confirm and strengthen them.

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THE PHYSICIAN OF LEIPSIG.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET.

It was the festival of Easter, many centuries ago; and crowds of the citizens and the peasantry in their holiday attire, were amusing themselves without the limits of the old and renowned city of Leipsig. Some were gathered around the jugglers, who here and there exhibited their tricks; some listened to itinerant musicians or ballad singers, some were conversing in groups; and all seemed intent on making the most of their holiday. A number of persons were passing in and out of a small house that stood a little apart; and their faces wore an expression different from the joyous or impatient looks of the multitude. In that deserted dwelling lay a man, who had been injured by a fall from his horse, and who was expected every moment to breathe his last.

The medical assistance that had been summoned in haste, was evidently altogether in vain. The patient lay exhausted on the rude couch that had been prepared for him; the looks of his attendants showed that hope was past. Yet it was apparent, from his dress, that he was a person of some rank, and able richly to reward any service rendered.

Amid the general silence, there was a murmur at length of—"Teuscher!"—"Christophe Teuscher!" The name was repeated several times; and presently a messenger was despatched on horseback, with all speed, into the city.

"And who is Christophe Teuscher?" asked a peasant of an artizan whom he knew.

"It is strange enough you have not heard of him," was the reply. "He is the best physician in all Leipsig—be he noble or burgher."

"Nay—that saith too much; or he would ere now have had his deserts in fortune as well as praise."

"You know him not; nor how he fighteth against his own fame. Not only will he take no fee, except where the patient is passing rich, but thanks ever seem to grieve him. I have seen him turn away with a look of bitterness and humiliation, from the gratitude of those he has saved from death by his marvellous cures. When he has given back a wife to her husband, or a child to its parents, he has been known to rush in haste from the apartment, that he might escape the sight of their joy."

"And once," observed another of the group, "when called to the death-bed of a sufferer whose disease baffled his skill—he was heard to burst into scornful laughter—saying as the sick expired before his eyes—'behold—ye fools! what all our art is worth!'"

"Then of a certainty," remarked the peasant, growing pale, "he has either committed some dreadful crime, and is doing penance by his science of healing, or he is leagued with evil spirits."

"Neither one nor the other," said another person. "Christophe is an excellent man, and loveth his fellow men only too well. I myself saw him when he went to his house that same night. I heard his laugh—of convulsive anguish—not of scorn! I followed him—for he saw me not in the darkness, even to his lonely dwelling. I watched at his door; I saw him weep—I heard his prayer—that Nature would aid him—would grant all he asked; would give him power over death. 'There *must* be a means,' he exclaimed, 'of vanquishing this last foe! Oh, that the secret were mine! I would guard it sacredly! none should share it; it should die with me—when wearied of the burden of life, I should lay it down! Only the power I crave—the *power* to triumph over death—to snatch his prey from his grasp! Let that be mine—and no young blooming life shall perish—where Teuscher comes!'"

Much more discourse there was concerning the strange physician, and his wonderful cures. But ere long a movement without the hut, and a murmur of "Teuscher," announced that he had arrived. Heedless of those who gazed on him, or of the whispers of curious spectators, he advanced at once to the bedside, and examined the patient.

As he did so, a shade of gloom passed over his face, and he shook his head. The bystanders understood that there was no hope.

Teuscher drew a phial from his vest, mingled a few drops in a cup of water, and directed that the wounded man should be raised to administer it. In vain! he was unable to swallow the medicine. A convulsion passed quickly over his features; the leaden hue of death settled on his face; his head fell back—and in a few minutes all was over.

"Too late!" muttered the physician, with a look almost of agony. "One moment too late!"

He turned and passed out of the door, regardless of the salutations of many who knew him.

While the bystanders were talking of what had occurred, Teuscher walked rapidly across the populated plain, taking no notice of any—till he had passed the last range of booths, and left the crowd behind him. The sun was setting—and threw rays of gold and purple over the particolored decorations of the festive scene. The universal gaiety was at its height; for the hour of breaking up was close at hand.

Suddenly the shrill note of a trumpet startled the physician from his gloomy reverie. Turning

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to the side whence it came, he saw a little figure of a man, of appearance so singular, that his attention was at once arrested. His dress was strange and fantastic to the last degree; his face deeply seamed with wrinkles, such as belong to extreme old age; but his complexion was fresh as youth itself. His lips were of glowing redness; his small, keen eyes flashed fire from beneath snow-white eyebrows; and his movements were rapid, elastic, and full of activity.

Teuscher looked in some surprise at this strange personage, who immediately addressed him.

"Ah, there is the famous doctor!" he cried. "My respects to you, sir! and I should be infinitely honored, if you would condescend to step into my humble dwelling, and witness a few of my experiments!"

"What are they?" asked Teuscher, while almost instinctively he followed the little man.

"Mere experiments, my dear sir," answered the stranger—"experiments in the noble sciences—in philosophy, astrology, necromancy. But I am free to confess that I am not worthy to hold a candle to you, learned doctor; although you are yet but a young man; while I have wasted three hundred years in vain efforts——"

"Ha!" interrupted Teuscher—"how say you? Are you three hundred years old?"

The little man burst out a laughing. At last he said—checking his mirth—"I said, learned doctor, that I had wasted three hundred years in trying to acquire knowledge. You may think how old I must have been before I found out my ignorance; and judge that I must have lived at least *four* hundred years."

Teuscher gazed on the speaker with astonishment. His words seemed the realization of his own wild visions, and he could not in spite of his reason, in spite of experience, refuse belief.

The stranger took him by the hand, and led him into a narrow and mean looking house.

"Enter, most learned sir," he said. "You mistrust me, I perceive; but I do not blame you nor take it amiss. There is a deal of jugglery and cheating in the world. But come, and look for yourself; perhaps you may believe what you see."

The apartment into which the physician was introduced, was black with smoke, and lined with various implements of surgery, and boxes of medicine, besides skeletons and dried specimens of numerous sorts, crocodiles, serpents in glass cases, &c. &c., all arranged in the most bizarre and fantastic manner. Teuscher smiled in some contempt as he saw all this. His companion observed it—and said—not without something like a sneer on his withered face. "The noble and learned doctor is quite in the right, to despise all this rubbish and mummery. It only serves me to keep my harlequin in condition, by producing an impression upon the people. They—as you know—cannot discern what is good, without something to dazzle their eyes as a preparation. You, mine honored sir, will have the goodness to accompany me into my innermost sanctuary—if I may be allowed the expression. I make bold to think you will not fail to be satisfied."

Saying this, the little man led the way toward the end of the dingy room, where hung a dark curtain covered with strange figures and cabalistic characters.

The old man drew aside the curtain, and led his guest into the open space beyond. This was very feebly lighted, and contained no other furniture than a bed, on which lay a figure dressed in a great variety of colors, and glittering with finery. At a signal from the little man, the figure sprang up with extraordinary agility, and with a bound stood directly before the two as they entered. At the same instant the room was filled with intense light. Teuscher glanced at the face of the goblin-like figure, and recoiled with an involuntary cry of terror. The goblin burst into a shrill laugh; sprang back and threw himself on the bed; while the old man drew the physician back into the apartment they had just quitted.

"You are somewhat disconcerted, worthy and learned sir, at the sight of my merry pet—my harlequin. And yet he is the living evidence that I really and truly possess the secret of baffling the power of death! I found him at the very last extremity; and he took rather an overdose. I saved him, however, and have kept him these hundred and odd years in the same case—just as you see him—not a feature altered. How little and strong the lad is yet!"

Teuscher gave a slight shudder.

"I know," continued the little old man—"what the worthy doctor has wished so long to obtain. The moment has now arrived for the fulfilment of those wishes—if you, learned sir, do not refuse the small condition I am constrained to impose with my lessons."

"What condition?" inquired the physician.

"Only," replied the old man, "that my worthy friend will be pleased to keep my pretty Hans, my harlequin, as an inmate of his house and home."

"Never!" cried Teuscher, with a thrill of disgust. "Never would I consent to that."

"The learned doctor will think a moment before he declines my offer," said the little man quietly. "Why should my lively pet be

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refused a shelter—a snug, remote apartment in some corner of your house—and a mouthful of food every day? Think what board payment you shall have! I would make the offer to no other person on earth but yourself!"

"But why must I keep the hideous creature in my house?" asked the doctor.

"Why?" replied the other. "Because I do not want to leave the poor child alone and helpless in the world I am going to leave. I am tired of living; and am resolved to die immediately, as gently and pleasantly as possible."

"How, old man?—will you die—and of your own free will?"

"Even so, worthy sir, in peace and blessedness! And when you have possessed my secret for a few hundred years—you too may have the same desire and determination. Ah, doctor! to live—and no longer have aught to love or live for—it is but a melancholy thing after all!"

"Give me your secret then—and die!" cried the excited Teuscher. "I will give your horrible harlequin an apartment in my house; but I will never look upon his hateful countenance. He shall wear a mask whenever I come to fetch his food."

"Just as you please," answered the old man, smiling. "Perhaps in your place I should be just as squeamish. This evening I must give the people a last lecture; but when the moon goes down expect me and my pet at your house. I will there communicate my arcanum to you; and having done so, will take leave and return to my dwelling. Early in the morning you may have the pleasure of placing me among my dried crocodiles, stuffed monkeys, and other curiosities."

So saying, the old man opened the door of his hut; and Teuscher went out and walked quickly homeward. His heart throbbed; his head burned; and he felt almost inclined to doubt if all he had heard and seen were not a strange dream.

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At sunrise the next morning Christophe Teuscher stood in his private laboratory, examining with great attention a dark ebony casket, richly inlaid with gold. This contained a number of small crystal bottles, filled with liquids of various colors.

"Life—life—in the midst of a thousand deaths!" exclaimed the physician. "In the judicious combination of several among these—the most concentrated and deadly poisons—each one of which would singly be instant destruction—lies the grand arcanum—the elixir of life—the secret of endless existence! So said the sage—and it is—it must be—*truth!* Why did I not long since discover this? But mine it is at last—mine alone—the power to triumph over death!"

If in time past Christophe Teuscher had won distinction by his astonishing cures—his fame now rose higher day after day. He never lost a patient to whom he was called, even in the last extremity. Nay—so great was his skill that for three years no sickness came nigh the dwellings where he was in the habit of going in and out, in his medical capacity.

While the renown of the wonderful physician spread all over Leipsig, many cautious persons shook their heads, and said they thought it hardly consistent with the excellent character he had hitherto borne, that for the space of three years he should have kept one apartment in his house closed—not one of his own servants being ever permitted to enter it. The master, it was said, took thither three times as much food and drink as would suffice for an ordinary man; yet, though Teuscher had always been thought extremely moderate, nothing was left. It was observed also—that whenever he left the house, he never neglected to fasten his study—from which access could be had to the mysterious chamber—with heavy bolts and locks. These precautions—it was noticed—had continued from the day on which, three years before, the old juggler and pretended magician had been found dead among his dried preparations, in his dwelling without the city gates.

Much observation was excited, of course, by these mysterious proceedings; and there were some who scrupled not to say that all was not as it should be. But Christophe's blameless life and amiable deportment were in his favor; and went far to check the mischief of malicious tongues. Then his own explanation was one that gave tolerable satisfaction, viz: that he entertained as an inmate of his house an unfortunate man, who had long labored under a malady that would not yield even to his unequalled skill; who was obliged to live under his continual care, and would see no one but his physician and nurse.

This was enough to silence calumny; the rumors died away, and henceforth none dared cast suspicion on the spotless character of the matchless physician.

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It was past midnight, and Teuscher had just closed the volume he had been studying—when a loud knock was heard at his door. A storm was raging without; the blast of November swept against the old building, and the rain pattered upon the casement; but Christophe never hesitated to answer the call of distress. As usual, his presence was required at the bedside of one in imminent danger.

As the light of the lamp fell upon the

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messenger's face, the physician started back, with an exclamation of surprise.

"You must come to my master instantly! You will not fail, Mr. Teuscher!" cried the servant, eagerly.

"Is your master ill?" asked the doctor.

"Oh, no! my lord, the count, is well; but his daughter, the Lady Lucille——"

"Lucille!" and Christophe's countenance changed.

"The Lady Lucille is dying! Will you not come, Mr. Teuscher? She cannot live an hour without your aid."

Without a moment's delay, save to seize the casket containing his medicines, and to lock the door of his study, the physician followed the messenger. Well he knew that the proud Count N—— would have sent for him only when all other help failed! He who could boast nought of rank or ancient descent, had dared to love the count's daughter—the gentle, beautiful Lucille. Their story was a common one; they had met by accident; they had become interested in each other; the haughty father had discovered the presumption of the physician, and threatened his daughter with his curse if she permitted him to look on her face again. Now—how deeply must the pride of that heart have been bowed beneath the shadow of approaching death—since Count N—— stooped to implore aid from one he had despised!

Not a word spoke Christophe on his rapid walk to the stately abode of the noble. The count himself received and conducted him to his daughter's chamber.

"Save my child," he said, in tones of agony, "and I myself will give her to you! You—and none other shall espouse her!"

Christophe pressed the hand of the despairing father, and passed into the apartment. Lucille lay unconscious upon the bed, her face pale as death itself; the light of her blue eyes quenched —her lips parted in the struggle for breath. Life lingered, as it were, on the very verge of extinction. The physician mixed some drops from his casket in water, and put it to her lips. Scarce had she tasted the life-draught when she swallowed it eagerly; recollection returned; the color came to her cheek; she smiled, and feebly reached her hand toward Christophe.

"You can save me—you alone!" she murmured. And the count, his eyes filled with tears, himself placed her hand in that of Teuscher—who knelt by the couch of his beloved—and blessed them both as his children.

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It was now for the first time that Teuscher felt the value of existence. To live—to love—to be filled with happiness—and to know that he could defy the grim destroyer!

The change from despair to rapture was too sudden; the emotions that agitated him—too violent; his health gave way. The night after he had received the count's promise found him in a raging fever.

The physician had never yet tried his arcanum upon himself. Heretofore he had wished for—not dreaded—the approach of death. What had he to bind him to this world? Now he was in expectation of the highest happiness earth could bestow; Lucille was to be his own; and he trembled to think that without aid, he might himself fall a victim. An eager desire for life—a terror of losing it—took possession of him. He sprang from his bed, opened the casket, and with trembling hands prepared the restorative mixture. Having mixed this in his cooling draught—he drained the cup immediately—and threw himself on the couch to await its healing effect.

The door was pushed open suddenly; and with an apish spring the hateful harlequin stood before him.

Teuscher started at the unexpected sight—and exclaimed angrily—"what dost thou here, fellow, at this late hour?—and how darest thou leave thy chamber without my permission?"

The creature laughed a hollow, unearthly laugh. "I have left my chamber," he said, in his hoarse voice—"because I am weary of my long imprisonment there. Now, sir doctor, I am going to appoint *you* a chamber!"

Therewith he slowly drew the mask from his face. The skeleton visage grinned hideous mockery.

Teuscher seemed in no way surprised at the frightful countenance thus disclosed; he only turned away with an expression of disgust.

"The mask!" he cried—"put on the mask! Thou knowest I cannot endure to look upon thy horrible face!"

Again the goblin burst into mocking laughter. "Poor earth worm!" he said—"how proud can a little flesh and blood show itself over its scaffolding of bones! Know, most famous doctor, that in three days thou shalt be even as myself; and in three times three—unconscious dust! For whom dost take me? For the poor wretch who—as the lying conjurer averred—drank by chance too much of his wonderful arcanum, and wasted to a skeleton—the effect of its two great potency? Know me at last for the king—the conqueror of the world—for Death himself!"

In speechless horror Teuscher's eyes were fixed on the apparition.

"Thou hast dared to defy me," the phantom continued; "to dream that thou could'st triumph

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over me! For this fool-hardy presumption I have doomed thee—in the prime of life—to quit this fair and blooming world, and go down to the deep darkness of the grave. Christophe Teuscher! this once thy dimmed eyes and feverish hand have played thee false! Thou hast mingled the wrong draught—and hast drunken death instead of life!"

A cloud came over the vision of the heart-stricken Teuscher; his brain reeled; a mortal anguish seized upon him. The vision of death vanished; but the fearful knowledge remained.

Next morning the physician was found by his servants stretched lifeless upon the floor. Their efforts restored him to consciousness; but he wasted away hour after hour; and in three days was indeed reduced to a living skeleton.

He had time to make his last will; in which he gave directions that a representation of him in that terrible condition should be placed on his monument—that it might serve as a warning to all who dared dream of opposing the course of nature in the pride of human science.

According to the prediction, Teuscher's sufferings were ended in nine days. The church of St. John was built over his tomb; and to this day may be seen, in its grounds the monument ordered in his testament.

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THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.: CHAPTER I.
BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.
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THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

CHAPTER I.

In the west riding of Yorkshire, England, is a pretty rural village buried in a valley, and threaded by one of those beautiful streams, bright and sparkling, that seem to find their source where downward mines give lustre to the waters. In and out, through the clustering trees, and by the neat cottages flashed the stream, now kissing the violet tinged slopes of a meadow, now sleeping in the shadows of a grove, and again leaping into the sunshine, laughing and eddying across the highway, till the very pebbles in its bed seemed to join in the liquid riot of sunbeams and water dancing merrily over them. After making its way in this coquettish fashion through the village, the stream lost itself in a grove of Druid oaks that half choked up one end of the valley, and above which the gable ends of a stately old manor house might be seen, garnished with tall chimneys, and bearing many a trace of that architecture to which old Queen Bess gave her name.

As it entered the dense shadows of the grove, the rivulet, like a playful child subdued by solitude and darkness, crept softly under the trees with a timid, whispering murmur, and seemed absolutely checking the sparkle of its waves as they rippled under and through the gnarled roots of the oaks that stretched themselves into the bed of the stream, and lay coiled under the water like a nest of huge serpents petrified or asleep. But there was one spot, a few fathoms deep in the wood, where the rivulet flashed out in its sparkling wilfulness again, and bent like a silver bow around an old stone cottage, so completely overrun with honeysuckles, roses, and creeping plants, that, but for a rude angle peeping out here and there, the very walls might have seemed built of flowing shrubs. The trees had been thinned around this dwelling that necessary sunshine might nourish a flower garden which lay glowing around it, and one stately tree, falling over the roof, gave a picturesque shelter to the humble spot. From the windows of this cottage might only be seen the windings of the rivulet and the glades of the forest park, where groups of deer lay slumbering, or stalked calmly over the rich sward. The village was shut out by a rampart of oaks, and an ocean of foliage lay between, and the manor house to which it was an appendage. On the morning when our story commences this cottage was occupied only by a young girl, busy as a butterfly in her household affairs. The day

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was yet early, and it was a pleasant thing to see the form of that lovely girl passing to and fro by the open window, while gracefully performing her household task.

Lucy Jones filled a humble station in the world; her father was only a game-keeper in the magnificent park we have described, and she, his only child and house-keeper, with all her beauty—and Lucy *was* very beautiful—had no aspirations beyond her present humble and happy lot—no aspirations did I say?—ah, there I was wrong! Lucy was a woman, a sweet tempered, warm-hearted young creature just in the flush of life and hope, and at times her pure heart would beat, and her cheek burn with thoughts of another cottage nearer to the manor house where the old gardener had left a son to mourn his loss and inherit his place and favor with the lord of that broad domain—for valley, village, forest and river as far as the eye could reach was the property of one man.

Now and then as Lucy proceeded with her work she would pause by a window opening upon the stream, put back the dew laden honeysuckles with her hand, and look toward the rivulet as if she expected some one to appear upon the bank. But all was solitude. The warm, bright sunshine playing upon the rich sward—the damp leaves and the sparkling waters alone met her gaze. Then she would draw a tremulous breath, which was not quite a sigh, and turn away, to come back again at the slightest noise, and peer anxiously forth as before. At last her watchfulness was rewarded by the sight of a fine, manly youth coming down the stream, with a fishing rod in one hand and a basket on his arm, crowded with rare hot-house flowers, such as Lucy with all her skill could never have persuaded to bloom even in the sunniest nook of her little garden.

Ah, Lucy Jones—Lucy Jones!—that was a tell-tale blush that rose to thy cheek as those soft, brown eyes of thine fell on the youth and his fragrant burden! One could almost count the pulsations of the little heart fluttering beneath thy crimson boddice—by the color that came and went so like the tints of sunset on that round and dimpled cheek. The smile too, how it played and brightened around that little roguish mouth! The sunshine twinkling among the wet rose-buds outside the window was not half so beautiful!

And now the young girl draws back from the window, though it were difficult to detect her through the thickly clustering leaves. She blushes and smiles, and her heart gives a pleasant bound, for upon the greensward she hears a quick footstep. Across one of her flower beds she sees a shadow fall. That pleasant sound and sight makes her blood glow and her nerves thrill. The footsteps drew nearer, and sound with a sort of ringing music on the threshold stone. There is a rustling of the vines as the fishing-rod is leaned against them. Now the color gushes afresh to Lucy's cheek, and with her little embrowned hands she seizes the churn handle, and falls diligently to work as if every thought were intent on dashing the golden butter from the mass of pearl white milk that her busy hands were agitating.

Lucy heard the latch lifted, and knew by the fresh gust of perfumed air sweeping in that the door was opened, but she did not turn her head or seem to heed it in the least, till a pair of brown hands were placed on each side of her head, and a mellow voice whispered something in her ear which we will not repeat—though it made the crimson boddice swell again, and brought a swarm of dimples to that rosy little mouth. Those dimples, those ripe lips, strawberries bathed in sunshine were not near so tempting. They were enough to provoke an anchorite, and John Manson was no hermit—nothing of the sort. "Oh, Lucy, forgive me, I have not seen you in five days, remember that," said John Manson, his fine face all in a glow, and assuming a half deprecating, half triumphant look, "see what I have brought you."

John Manson dropped upon one knee, set his basket on the floor, and parting the flowers, revealed a mass of luscious cherries glowing underneath.

"Oh! John," said Lucy, lifting her finger mischievously.

"No—no—they are from my own tree at the end of the cottage, that which shelters the little bed room window," said John, earnestly, "but never bore fruit till this year. Before another comes round you shall gather the cherries yourself from the casement: I was thinking so this morning as I stripped the boughs for you. Oh! Lucy, how happy we shall be!"

The smile grew softer upon the lips of that young girl, and her brown eyes were flooded with love-light as they fell upon the upturned face of her lover. She did not answer his full hearted appeal, but bent down and began to remove the flowers from the basket to an old fashioned china vase which stood on the window seat close by. But John saw that her long, black eyelashes were moist, and that her hands grew tremulous as they wandered amid the blossoms, and these signs of feeling made his heart swell more than words could have done.

The flowers were crowded into the capacious

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vase. The cherries lay glowing upon the table in a dish of cut crystal, injured by a slight fracture in the edge, which defect had sent the rich vessel from the manor house to the cottage, where it become a boast and an ornament, and there amid the commingled perfume of fruit and blossoms the lovers set down together.

"Now tell me," said Manson, looking through the window, and toying uneasily with a cluster of cherries which he had taken from the dish—"what has happened during my absence—what—what—visitors have you had?"

"None that were welcome," said Lucy, and her face took a serious expression. "*He* was here twice in one day, but I would hold no conversation with him. Indeed but for my father's commands I would have left the house the moment he entered it."

Manson arose and began to pace the floor. "Why will your father persist in making us miserable?" he said, with some bitterness. "Will he forever remain blind to the character of this bad man? Has a few hundred pounds sealed his eyes so thoroughly that nothing will open them?"

"I do not know," replied Lucy, and her eyes filled with tears—"but he seems to have cast a spell upon my poor father. It is not his money—at least I think not—there is something else—some influence that I cannot fathom that makes my father advocate his cause so earnestly. If the master would but send him away all might be well. Do you know, John, I sometimes suspect him of instigating this discontent among the tenants."

"And I too," replied Manson, with energy. "Whoever heard the people cavil about their rents, or complain of the master till he come among us. Even your father, Lucy, who drew his first breath on the estate—even he has become discontented since this sub-agent got possession of his ear. There will come trouble out of this—trouble to us all. I have foreseen it a long time. This morning I feel more certain of it than ever?"

"Let us hope for the best!" replied Lucy, placing a hand upon her lover's arm as he come near her again. "Of one thing you are certain, whatever influence this man may obtain over my father, it shall never reach me! With my whole heart and strength I love you, John—not even death could force me to encourage another!"

"God bless you for saying that!" replied John Manson, with hearty warmth, and tears sparkled in his fine eyes as he took Lucy in his arms and held her close to his heart. "Heaven knows I never doubted you, Lucy, yet it is a comfort to hear this sweet promise from lips that never yet deceived me. Let the wretch prowl about!—while we love each other so much what harm can he do? Yet I sometimes long to beset him for daring to lift his eyes this way; I always feel the blood tingling at my fingers end whenever he crosses my path."

"Nay, let him alone; he is a dangerous man, quiet and subtle as a serpent, but all the more to be feared for that. Let him alone, John, or some mischief will come of it. He will prove no straightforward enemy, such as you can cope with. Let the man take his own course, he cannot shake our faith in each other! He cannot rob us of our love! Why then should we heed him at all?"

"I know—I know," said Manson, impetuously, "still I cannot help it. I do detest him, and always shall so long as he dares to look upon you with hope. Oh! if your father could but be brought to see him in his true light."

"Perhaps you had better allow Thomas Jones to think a little for himself," said a sneering voice at the window.

Lucy started and clung to Manson's arm, who walked straight to the casement, and dashing aside the vines stood face to face with two men stationed close to the opening, one leaning with an air of insulting languor against the stone work—the other, a middle aged man, short and stout, holding unto his gun with both hands, which he had planted so hard upon the ground that the stock was buried in the flowing turf, while his chin rested upon the muzzle. The face of this man lowered with a stern and angry cloud: his heavy brows drooped low over two coal black eyes full of angry fire, and the fingers with which he clasped the gun worked nervously about the muzzle, as if he could hardly refrain from lifting the weapon to his shoulder.

"Lucy—girl! I say, take your hand from that young man's arm," cried the game-keeper. His voice trembled with anger, and loosing his grasp on the fowling piece he lifted a finger threateningly toward the young creature, who, in the first impulse of surprise and terror, had clung to her lover for protection against the frowning looks bent upon her.

"Oh! father, do not be angry with us!" said the poor girl, dropping her hand and shrinking beneath the gloomy scrowl that grew darker and darker on the game-keeper's face—"John only came to bring us some cherries from his own garden—see! and the flowers, too, he has been away nearly a week, so it was natural that he should think of us the first thing."

"And it was natural that he should come hither to abuse my friends, and instigate my

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own child to rebellion against my wishes was it?" rejoined the game-keeper, fiercely. "I tell you, girl, this fellow must leave my house, and never darken its door again—I have seen enough—heard enough—you can't deceive me now—I will be master under my own roof. Let it be cleared of unwelcome guests."

"Your roof shall be free of my company at once," said John Manson, addressing the angry game-keeper in a voice that trembled more from wounded feeling than from resentment at this rude treatment from his old friend. "It is the first time that I ever stood beneath it without a welcome. It will be the last time. As for that man," continued the outraged youth, pointing sternly at the younger person who stood by the window with a sneer on his lip and in his eye—"as for that man, let him beware how he crosses my path. He has come between me and my father's old friend. He has dared to insult this my plighted wife with his unwelcome love-talk. He is, I solemnly believe, engaged in practices that will yet bring him within the clutch of the law. I warn you against him Thomas Jones. Look on his face, see how pale my words have made him! His mouth, his eyes, he cannot control them always. Once more, Thomas Jones, I warn you against that man!"

The energy with which Manson spoke, the lightning flash of his eyes had its effect upon both the game-keeper and his companion. The old forester looked first at the excited speaker, then at the man by his side, and a shade of surprise not unmingled with suspicion swept across his features. Manson seized Lucy's hand within his, and wringing it convulsively, turned to leave the cottage.

"Sir, young man," exclaimed Hyatt, for that was the name which the game-keeper's companion bore, "do not attempt to sneak off thus! Before this good man and his daughter I will force you to take back your insolent words."

Hyatt spoke evidently with desperate effort. His black eyes gleamed unsteadily, and he turned them from side to side, while his lips trembled and grew white either with suppressed rage or cowardly fear—perchance both commingled to give his features that fiendish, and yet half craven expression.

Manson cast a fierce glance upon him, and smiled disdainfully. "When the master comes we shall learn more of the attorneys he has sent us," was the answer.

Again that pallid look came over Hyatt, but the game-keeper's eyes were upon him, and he rallied again.

"The rustic is desperate with fear of losing your daughter," he said, with a sneering smile, "and who can blame him?" he continued, casting a glance at Lucy that made her shrink closer to Manson's side.

"I have no fear of losing her," said Manson, casting a powerful arm around the young girl. "She is my promised wife, I neither doubt her nor fear you. The day will come when Thomas Jones there, will know you as you are! God forbid that it then be too late to save his old heart the trouble you are preparing for it."

"We have had enough talk!" said the game-keeper. "Leave my house, John Manson; I and my friend here want a mouthful of bread and cheese; and I will not darken the door-stead till you have passed through."

"You shall not bid me begone twice," said Manson, in the same proudly sorrowful tone that he had throughout maintained while addressing the old man. "Good bye, Lucy, it looks like a dark day for us now, but have a firm heart they cannot keep us asunder long. Good bye!"

"Good bye, do not fear for me," said Lucy, returning his grasp with her trembling fingers, while her eyes filled with tears; "my father's doors will not long be closed against the son of his old friend."

"I never expected to see it," cried the young man, dashing one hand across his eyes, and then settling his hat as if the motion had been prompted by that intention, and without turning his face again toward the two men at the window, he strode from the house.

The moment he was gone, Jones and Hyatt came round to the front of the cottage and entered it. They found Lucy striving to suppress the tears that had burst forth on her lover's departure, but without seeming to heed her distress the old man bade her bring forth something to eat, observing that he should not be home to dinner, and perhaps might be absent till late at night.

Lucy could not suppress a sigh, and her tears began to flow again. Never, till the arrival of Hyatt in the neighborhood, had her father spent any of his evening hours from home. Punctual in all things before, since that time his entire habits had changed; irregularity at meals; late hours, and a general neglect of his trust had begun to mark a life hitherto exemplary and almost patriarchal in its simplicity. It was, therefore, with a new weight at her heart that Lucy brought forth the provisions that her father had commanded. Without any particular reason for apprehension that she could have defined to herself, the young girl had learned to dread this unpropitious change in her father's habits. Still she allowed none of these feelings to become manifest, but arranged the little table in

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silence. In order to make room for the repast, Lucy lifted the dish of cherries, and was bearing it to the window seat, when Hyatt coolly reached forth his hand as if to help himself to a portion of the fruit. Lucy drew back with a burning cheek, and placing the dish upon the stone work of the window, cast some loose flowers that had been left there over its ruby contents, and motioned the unwelcome guest to place himself by the table.

A disagreeable smile gleamed on Hyatt's face as he sat down, and he muttered something between his teeth.

"Take away this dish-water, and give us something fit for men to drink!" cried the old man, disdainfully pushing aside the noggin of rich buttermilk, that, till of late, had been his favorite beverage. "I do not see why we should not have ale to drink as well as those who call themselves our betters!"

"Yes, and brandy, too, with wine of the reddest," said Hyatt. "What is drink for one man is drink for another. Were I park-keeper here this youngling of a lord should drink no wine which did not wash my lips too."

Jones looked round at Lucy somewhat uneasily, and touched his companion's foot under the table.

"Hush, she is not prepared—she knows nothing of the claim yet," he said, in a low voice.

Hyatt nodded his head and answered.

"All in good time. Keep that Manson from her, and she is too fine a girl not to feel her own rights and the value of her own beauty."

This was said in an undertone, and as he spoke Hyatt cast a sidelong glance at Lucy, who had seated herself near the door, and was looking out as if to avoid any conversation with the hateful guest her father had brought home. She was, indeed, very beautiful with that sad expression of countenance—those large, brown eyes, mournful, and yet sparkling with recent excitement, and the wealth of her rich hair escaping in wavy tresses from the braid which confined it at the back of the head. Jones glanced toward her, and a smile of parental vanity broke over his face.

"She will do well enough," he said; "her mother was a handsome woman—but we must not put these high flown fancies into her head."

"Or she may think nothing but a lord good enough for her," murmured Hyatt. "Nay, I heard in the village that the young lord of the manor had cast an eye upon her, and that you, friend Jones, were over fond of sending her up to the mansion house."

"You have heard a foul lie then," cried Jones, striking his clenched hand on the table with a violence that made the plates rattle, and sent a dash of foam leaping from the ale cup half over the table. "I never sent her to the house; she never goes there."

"Well—well, it must be only village gossip," said the other, softly; "or perhaps the young lord may have spread the idea himself. These nobles have little regard for the character of a poor girl like your daughter. Now I think again—it must have come from him, for his valet was the man who joked upon the subject over his cup only the night before his master went abroad. The tap-room was full, and all the villagers heard it."

"The villain," exclaimed Jones through his shut teeth, and clenching the handle of his knife fiercely. "Would to heaven I had them here—master and man—in the Druid woods their bones should ache for it."

"Better means than that may be found to punish them," replied Hyatt, still subduing his voice. "Let us find the papers we spoke of, and force him to give back that which he took from your father. The Mier farms and their woodlands—why if my plan of the boundaries is right this claim leaves one-third of the park here—including this bend of the stream and the house."

"But I have searched the old building every where," Jones was about to reply, but that instant Lucy arose. Hyatt touched the old man's foot again, and, taking up the ale can, Jones drowned his sentence in its contents.

When their repast was ended, the two men arose and went out again, leaving the young girl depressed and somewhat alarmed by the few words that had reached her during their conversation.

Meantime the park-keeper and his companion walked into the thickest of the wood, conversing earnestly all the time.

"And so you have searched the house thoroughly," said Hyatt.

"Every nook and corner, and not a scrap can I find."

"Still you are well assured that your grandfather held the property?"

"Yes, but I always thought till you told me better, that it was sold to the old lord."

"No—no, there was a debt, a mere trifle; your grandfather was ill and knew nothing of the law; the old lord took advantage of his illness and his ignorance, and swept his park boundaries around the whole. Your father was an infant, and before he was old enough to understand the fraud it was forgotten. When he grew up the old lord made him park-keeper, gave him the house that was really his own to

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live in—and thus quieted his conscience while he hushed up the whole affair so effectually that people forgot to ask questions."

"But the deeds—I have not a scrap of paper to show that the land was ever owned by my grandfather. Besides the young lord is rich, and I have no money to fee lawyers with."

"As for that," said Hyatt, bending his eyes to the earth, and casting a sidelong glance at the old man through his dark lashes—"as for that, there can be no trouble. The moment I am Lucy's husband, and thus have a claim for hereafter on the land, all that will be managed. The deeds! If we only had the deeds all would be easy enough!"

"But how are they to be found?—where can they be?" said the game-keeper, becoming more and more earnest.

"The moment I got an inkling of the claim," replied Hyatt, "from the papers that were placed in our hands I made up my mind that these deeds must be with you, as they were not to be found among the documents sent up to his lordship's solicitor; so being a younger partner in the firm and easily spared, as the property is of value I ran down to see if they could be obtained, determined to see justice done to an honest man, though his lordship is our client."

"But now what is to be done?" rejoined the game-keeper, dejectedly. "They certainly are not in the house!"

"It is unfortunate certainly, and a great disappointment to me," said Hyatt, tapping his boot with a walking stick that he had just cut from the wood; "our firm is prospering, and your daughter is very lovely. With my savings and a pretty farm, the two cut out from this park, we might have set up as landholders and country gentlemen as well as our betters. My friend you *must* find these deeds!"

"But how—where am I to look?" cried Jones, with a gesture of impatience. "They are not at my house—they are not among the papers sent to your firm for safe keeping!"

"No—but there is a memorandum which convinces me of their existence," said Hyatt, thoughtfully, then lifting his hand as if some sudden idea had struck him, he exclaimed—"the manor house—it is possible that these deeds may have been given up to the old lord and stored away in the mansion. It was only the most important papers that were sent up to us."

The game-keeper's face brightened. "How stupid of us not to think of that before," he said, with animation: "of course they must be there. I have seen a tin box labelled 'important papers' a dozen times standing on an upper shelf in the plate closet—but then," and here the old man's countenance fell, "how are we to get a sight of them? The young lord would never give us leave to rummage his papers."

Hyatt hesitated. The color came and went on his cheek; and he began to tear up a cluster of wild flowers with his stick. That which he was about to propose was so important that even his audacious self-possession gave way, and for a moment the two stood together in silence.

"The young lord is absent now, and his permission to search for these papers could not be obtained, though he were ever so willing; but in searching for that which is your own, why ask permission of any one, is not the manor left under your charge?"

"If it were," cried the game-keeper, bluntly, "do you think that I would abuse my trust?"

"Do *you* think that his lordship will of his own accord render up papers that will curtail one-fourth of the richest portion of his domain; yet the papers are yours, and you have a right to them. If he will not render them up, and who expects this of him—how are they to be seen?"

"Sure enough, I have a right to my own property!" muttered the old man.

"And have a right to search for it wherever it is unjustly detained," responded Hyatt, still busying himself with the broken tuft of blossoms.

"Why—yes," said the game-keeper, half reluctantly—"yes, there can be no doubt of that—but still——"

"But still you cannot break the bondage this aristocrat has placed you in. You are afraid of his displeasure, and so give up a rich inheritance rather than take the only means left of securing it to yourself. I thought you had more spirit, Jones, but it seems that though born a gentleman, it takes but a short season of servitude to place a sweep's spirit in your bosom."

The old man's cheek blazed, and his whole fiery spirit was aroused by this speech. Hyatt marked the signs of his anger—the clenched hand, the swelling chest, and the fierce trembling of his lips.

"I did not mean to offend you, Jones, but this thing requires the courage to do right, and I am disappointed in not finding it with you!"

"I am not afraid to do anything that is honest and right—I am afraid of nothing—let me tell you that, young sir—nothing, I say, right or wrong!"

"I should trust otherwise," said Hyatt, very gravely; "courage is beautiful when honorably applied. This is a case of the plainest justice, the proofs of your inheritance lie up yonder in a house left under your charge."

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"No—no—there you rest under a mistake," cried the old man. "I am in charge of the grounds, not of the manor house."

Hyatt started, and the color left his face.

"Indeed, I thought it was otherwise—that both house and grounds were in your care," he said, in a voice that shook through all his efforts to appear indifferent. "Who then has care of the manor house during the lord's absence?"

"The keys were left with John Manson—that is the keys of the plate-room and other apartments where valuables are kept."

"Indeed—and does he stay at the house?"

"No—there is only the house-keeper there, and a maid or two. John likes his own cottage too well. So long as he has the valuables under bolt and bar, with the keys in his own possession, they are safe enough. A pick axe would hardly break through the plate room."

A singular and baffled expression came over Hyatt's face, he mused a few moments, and then said with assumed carelessness.

"It is a pity these keys were not left with you. This young rustic is so wedded to his lord that all hopes of obtaining access to the deeds through him would be useless. We may as well give up the property at once. It is a fine independence—enough to make a gentleman of you, and a lady of that sweet girl. Well—well, it cannot be helped. If the keys had been left with you now, we might just have searched quietly to be sure that the documents were there, and then have demanded them after of the young lord."

"Then you did not mean to take the deeds away!" cried the game-keeper, eagerly.

"Take them away—my good friend where would your fancy lead to. No—no, only let us be assured that they are in his possession—let us be certain of the exact spot where the deeds may be found, and all the rest will be easy enough. Of course we come forward in the name of the law and demand them. Now he might deny their existence, but after you have seen them—with me for a witness—this denial would not answer."

"So all we want is a sight of the deeds."

"That is all, but as you have not the keys, it is of no use talking about it, especially as we have very foolishly quarrelled with the young man who holds them. He would not oblige us now, though our object is doubtless most honorable and so important."

"Perhaps I should not ask him," said the game-keeper, with a shrewd smile. "If I once make up my mind to the thing it could be done without the consent of John Manson."

It required all Hyatt's self-control to subdue the expression of his face as these words were uttered, but a gleam or two flashing beneath the half closed eyelids, was all that he suffered to appear of the triumph that he felt.

"Well, we will talk the matter over as we go toward the village. I have ordered a dinner at the public house, and a few bottles of choice wine will help us to deliberate. You are an honest fellow, Thomas Jones, and I respect you for it. Come along now, and do not think that other people cannot act conscientiously as well as yourself. Come, we will take a walk across the fields, and go up to my room through the back way. The landlord had my orders before I came out, so we shall be quite alone!"

The game-keeper lifted his rifle, and swinging it over one shoulder moved toward the village, followed by his young companion. As they walked forward both sank into a fit of musing that kept them silent all the way.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION: CHAPTER II.
BY MRS.ANN S.STEPHENS.
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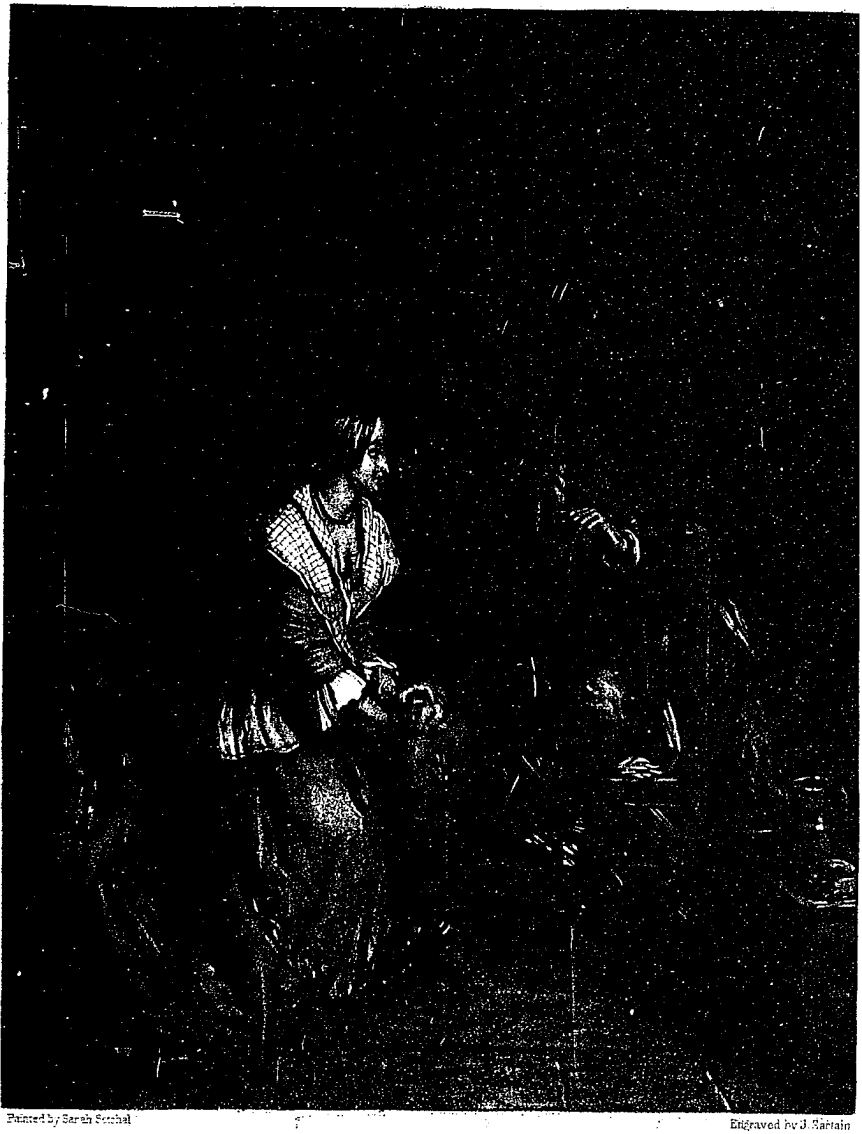

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THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

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THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

CHAPTER II.

Up to the picturesque and broken hills that sheltered the scene described in our last chapter, ran the richly wooded park that for centuries had scarcely been diminished in its original boundary by the falling of a single tree. One end of the valley was completely choked up by its masses of foliage, and, where it opened into the country beyond, the hills broke down to a level in a thousand knolls and green ridges, scarcely less beautiful than the valley itself. Beyond this wild and broken ground ran a common of considerable extent, purple and golden with heather and broom flowers, under which the grouse sheltered their young, and called to each other in the stillness. Beyond this heath the country rolled up into hills again, and, on the horizon, might be distinguished a spire or two, which gave indications of a village beyond: and, far to the left, rose a single ruined tower, the fragment of some old Norman castle, whose proportions had once covered a considerable space of land between the hills.

About three days after the scene described in our last chapter, a solitary horseman rode cautiously along the highway that led up the valley, and mounting the hill where the road swept around the boundaries of the park, came slowly out into the open country beyond. The man kept his horse upon the turf as much as possible, and looked around now and then as his road drew near the manor house, as if fearful of observation: a precaution that seemed quite unnecessary, for the night was drawing on, and in the thick shadows flung by the trees it would have been difficult to distinguish his features.

As he came into the open country, the horseman abandoned the caution hitherto manifested in his movements, and striking into a brisk trot, though the broken descent made his pace somewhat dangerous, turned his course through the open heath.

When his eyes first fell upon it, the plain was covered with the dusky purple of twilight, but, as he advanced, the moon rose, flooding the whole expanse with her beautiful light, into which the horseman plunged like some dark spirit forcing a passage through the cloud portals of Paradise.

Away over the flower-scented plain plunged that man and horse. The beautiful stillness of night, its dews, its cool and balmy air were all around them. The broad expanse, the soft blue sky above, and the wild blossoms breathing their last in fragrance as they were trampled beneath the hoofs of that impetuous steed, all failed to win the notice of that solitary horseman. His eye was bent on the ruined tower that arose among the hills with its ivy-clad walls bathed in the moonlight. As he looked, a heavy frown gathered upon his forehead, and he muttered between his teeth some words of fierce discontent. All at once a light, like the twinkle of a star, faint and clear, shot forth from the tower; an anxious eye only could have detected it through the heavy foliage, but the horseman saw its first gleam, and the frown left his face.

"Ha! it is all right!" he exclaimed, putting spurs to his horse, and starting forward with renewed speed. "I thought they would be punctual."

The horseman soon began to mount the hills, and after a half hour's hard riding reached the ruined tower, where he dismounted, leaving his horse tied in the shadow flung by a broken angle of the wall.

He seemed familiar with the place, wild and desolate as it was, for threading his way cautiously through the broken stones that littered the earth everywhere around the tower, he lifted the ivy from what seemed a rent in the wall, and, feeling his way, began to mount a ruined stair-case, guided only by the faint gleams of moonlight that penetrated the crevises and loop-holes in the dilapidated stone-work. Many huge stone blocks that had formed the stairs were torn away, and others trembled and yielded beneath his footsteps, though he clung to the wall

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with both hands in mounting, afraid to trust his weight to the unstable masonry. At length, as a massive block bent, and in its vibration tore away some of the looser stones that fell downward with a crash, the man lost all caution, and called out in a voice where anger and affright were fiercely blended.

"What ho!—have you a wish that I break my neck in this dark hole? Lights here—lights I say."

"Hush!" said a voice from the top of the stair-case, while a ruddy gleam shot downward over the rough masonry and the pale countenance of the man, who had sprung to the fragment of a step higher up, and with his hands grasping the angle of what had been a casement, was trembling from hand to foot.

"Why confound it man! with this thundering of the stones and shouting you might be heard a mile off."

"Hold the light nearer, I say: nearer yet," cried Hyatt. "I believe the whole stair-case is going; I never attempted this infernal pass in the dark before. Come down, I say, and give me your hand!"

"There," cried the other, with a compassionating sneer, descending a step or two, and reaching forth his hand, which Hyatt eagerly grasped.

"Why how the fellow shakes, and all because a few old stones have rattled down into the vault. Come pluck up courage now, you were never born to *break* your own neck, that is certain."

Hyatt made no answer, but sprang upward with a desperate leap, and stood upon the platform with his jeering friend, who held the light to his face and chuckled softly at its whiteness.

"Oh! you city fellows are sad cowards after all," he said. "Good for nothing except to plot deeds which braver men are to act. Come on, the others are waiting."

With these half contemptuous words the man turned away, and, carrying the light before him, entered what had once been a small chamber embedded in the massive walls of the tower. Though in a most ruinous and dilapidated state, the chinks and holes that riddled the walls were so choked up and girded together with ivy that the air itself was close and stifling, while a moderate quantity of light would scarcely be detected outside the walls.

In this apartment sat two other men upon a block of stone which had fallen into the room. They were playing cards by the light of a dark lantern swung overhead to a branch of ivy that had twined itself along the inner wall; both these men were young, and even passably dressed. They started up as Hyatt and his companion entered: and while one shuffled the cards idly in his hands, the other took a handkerchief of delicate cambric from the stone where he had spread it for the protection of his dove-colored garments: and, passing it across his face, gave it a flirt which extinguished the lamp held by Hyatt's guide.

"Nay, never look crusty about the matter, old boy," he said, quietly placing the kerchief in his pocket. "We need not kindle a beacon for any straggler that chooses to look this way from the village. Come, sit down, the lantern gives light enough for us to talk by. Hyatt, my fine fellow, what news from the manor? Is the old game-keeper bought over? Have you succeeded in making love to the old housekeeper?"

"Are you ready for action?" cried the man who had assisted Hyatt from his peril on the stair-case, and who was evidently much the elder of the party. "We have been waiting long enough for this one job!"

"Well—well, you will not have to wait much longer," said Hyatt, who had scarcely recovered his breath.

"Are your horses here?"

"Yes—yes."

"And ready!"

"Saddled and bitted!"

"And you are all armed?"

The elder of the men smiled and thrust a hand into his bosom.

"What time is it now?" said Hyatt.

The young gentleman whose nicety of apparel we have mentioned, took a glittering little watch from his vest, and, bending toward the lantern, pronounced it nine o'clock.

"It is earlier than I thought," said Hyatt. "Well, we have half an hour good to arrange our plans in: then to the saddle at once."

"Then it comes off to-night?" said the elder of the company, and his eagle eye kindled.

"Within two hours, if we do not break our necks in getting down from this tottering old rooks nest," said Hyatt. "But how have you all managed matters? I trust you have not been together in either of the villages," he added, with some anxiety. "You, Smith, should know how to manage things better than that!"

"And so I have," replied the elder of the party, with a disagreeable smile; "for my part I like large towns, where some little thing can always be picked up in the way of business. I lodged in Manchester last night."

"And you, Blakely?" said Hyatt, addressing the young man whose white handerchief had done such execution on the lamp.

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"Oh! I came from the little manufacturing town ten miles this way; he overtook me on the road, and was disposed to be civil; but I am a courteous man, and never encourage the advances of strangers."

Smith laughed and nodded his head encouragingly.

"It is a fact," he said, "considering the short time since I found him a travelling agent for the firm of 'Bradley, Coit & Co.', you would hardly believe the progress he has made in the craft. He really looked in my face this morning as if we had never met before, though not a single soul was near to remark us if we had conversed a little."

"I was practising on the last lesson you gave me!" said the young man, evidently proud of his teacher's commendation.

"Smith has not found any of us very dull pupils, I should think!" said Hyatt, casting one of his side-long glances from the young man to the older one.

Smith burst into a laugh, the more disagreeable that it was suppressed, and answered with an oath that "in his den, at the attorney's office, Hyatt had learned enough of craft and policy, when fifteen years old, to teach half a dozen rough, honest rogues like himself."

And this gentle compliment brought a well pleased and subtle smile to Hyatt's lip.

"You shall find that I have not mismanaged the affair in hand," he said, "though it has been a troublesome one enough. Everything is ready: you have but to ride over and help yourselves, I can tell you, and that without the dangerous expedient of pistols and crow-bar."

The man who held the cards, and had been carelessly shuffling them all the time, without much apparent interest in what was going forward, suddenly flung them down and joined in the conversation.

"Now this looks like earnest," he said. "If we are to commence operations at once, I shall not think this head work of Hyatt's so very bad after all. For my part I was about giving up the job altogether. Those little beauties"—and he pointed to the cards—"are a safer way of making money; and I like fishing in the London hills much better than the trout streams hereabouts, unless I too could carry my basket into some stone lodge, and find a pretty park-keeper's daughter to fry the trout for me!"

"And so you have been setting spies upon me," answered Hyatt, while a faint red shot over his forehead.

"Not at all," replied the other, with great coolness; "but the fame of your conquest has got abroad, and of the gardener's jealousy too. It is astonishing how a little innocent country life sharpens ones appetite for this sort of game. I had half a mind to try my own luck with the pretty rustic."

"Pshaw!" interrupted Smith, with a contemptuous sneer. "Let us to business, gentlemen."

"Yes, to business—to business," Blakely joined in. "What have we to do with country girls, except when they can be used as tools in the trade!"

"I should think we had trifled away enough time," said Hyatt, drily.

"Well, now for the job in hand," exclaimed the others, and the three men drew close around Hyatt, and listened to the plan he had arranged for them with keen interest. As he proceeded, exclamations of warm approval, sometimes in the form of an oath, broke from the listeners; and even in the dim light their faces might be seen to kindle up with fierce expectation.

"Now," said Hyatt, as his plan of villainy was fully understand, "we have but to mount and away; to-morrow at dawn we must all be thirty miles apart."

This speech was followed by a slight bustle of preparation. Each of the party examined his fire-arms, and a sterner expression lay upon every countenance as it was revealed in the gloom. A moment after, and the four men were creeping down the dismantled stair-case by the light of a lantern which Smith, who came last, held carefully sheltered from the air. Then followed the muffled tread of horses descending the hills, and after that four detached horsemen might be seen darting silently and swift as a shadow across the heath, far apart, but all bearing toward the same point. That point was the old manor house, whose chimnies could be seen rising dimly above the trees in the mouth of the valley.

On the same evening when these movements were going forward at the manor house, Jones, the park-keeper, was wandering like an unquiet spirit about his own dwelling. For half an hour he sat on the river's brink, shaded by a clump of hazle bushes, and watching his daughter, who sat by the open window, with an eager and cat-like gaze. Then he left his shelter: stole softly along the garden wall, and still continued his guard, evidently growing more and more anxious each moment. At length some manifestations of unrest seemed visible in the sweet girl, who sat so beautiful and angel-like by the open casement. As the moon arose she began to exhibit signs of keen expectation: she would arise and walk about the room, then steal back to the casement, and lean out with her head bent on

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one side, as if her ear thirsted for the sound of a loved footstep crossing the turf. But all was still, and at length she sank back to her chair, and leaning her cheek on the palm of her hand, fell into an attitude of languid disappointment. The moon was up, broad and full, flooding the park, the flower garden, and the glancing stream with a glory that seemed half born of the dew, so bright and fragrant was the moist herbage. It was past the hour when Manson had promised to be upon the brink of the rivulet. Yet with all her anxious watching no shadow or sign of his presence could be detected on the bank. He would not come to the house, she was well aware of that: but he knew that her father would be absent that evening, for she had sent him word, and it was very singular that he should not have kept his promise. These thoughts were enough to make the young girl sad, combined as they were with fears and apprehensions of another kind: so she fell into the attitude we have described, and tears stole softly down her cheek. It seemed as if every thing that she had ever loved were deserting her.

The game-keeper saw all this, and he too was dissatisfied, but there was excitement and anger blended with his disappointment, for the first time in his life he was indignant that his own child had not acted counter to his orders. That night she was to have been the decoy bird to draw young Manson from his guard. Two days before, Jones had openly spoken of his intended absence that night, fully persuaded that Manson would never allow this opportunity for an interview with his daughter to pass unimproved. But now the evening was drawing to a close; eight, nine, ten o'clock sounded from the village steeple, and still his daughter sat by the casement motionless and weeping, but so silent that he could not detect her grief.

Now the hour had come, and at all risks he must depart. Cautiously and like a thief the old man stole from his own dwelling, and striking into a forest path, walked toward the manor house. He believed that his errand was a just one, that the expedition on which he was bent was such as might be proclaimed before men and angels without a blush, and yet the old man would start at each sound and hold his breath with a thrill of guilty fear, if a form started in its thicket, or a bird was disturbed for an instant, in the tree boughs above his head. The old man's head had been protected, but his heart, that fresh, honest heart, was right all the time, and it kept warning him back at every step as if it foretold how much of misery that night's work would bring on him and his. But the head was wilful in its newly acquired ideas, and so Thomas Jones walked on to meet the destiny he was preparing for himself.

There was a hard lawn before the manor house, and a magnificent chestnut overrun the approach to the front door. The lawn was dotted with flowering shrubs, and sloped so gently into the glowing beds of a flower garden that one scarcely knew where the verdure and bloom were first blended together.

As the game-keeper issued from the park, his eye fell upon the beautiful scene; the ancient house with its gables, its chimnies, and its elaborate stone work throwing down a massive shadow of its own, on the picturesque garden, through the silver moonlight, till the flower beds were lithographed, as it were, with another old building softened and idealized to a degree of dream-like beauty, that no pencil could have approached.

As the old man gazed on this scene, so beautiful and tranquil, his heart misgave him. The entire stillness was oppressive; it seemed to bring him more to the eye of the Almighty than he had ever been on earth before. He felt as if the shadow of some great crime had crept between his soul and the stars that were looking down upon him, the moonlight that was veiling all things with its holy lightness. Filled with these sensations, the old man paused and began to meditate. What had seemed easy and right in the broad day-time, with the bustle of life all around him, and the tempter by his side, took a more and more important aspect in the still night, when he was left alone with the good and his natural self. He pondered, hesitated, and turned to retrace his steps, thinking of his daughter as of an angel sitting by the portals of heaven, ready to welcome him back with such a smile as he had often worshipped upon her mother's lip.

Filled with these better thoughts, the old man turned to obey his good angel, and walked swiftly forward, eager to reach the shelter of his own roof. But scarcely had he advanced a hundred paces into the woods, when the figure of a man glided through the trees and drew close to him. The old man paused, and a quick revulsion of feelings made his breath come sharply, for a beam of moonlight falling through the branches, revealed the face of young Hyatt.

"Punctual always!" said the young man, in a low voice, "I hope you got the keys without trouble."

"Not yet—I—I—that is, I have not been to the garden cottage!"

"What!" cried the other in a voice of alarm, "surely you will not let this last opportunity for recovering your property pass by!"

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"I do not know," replied Jones, doubtingly, but turning down a by-path in obedience to Hyatt, who softly insinuated his arm under that of the half repentant man, "I am beginning to think that an act which must be done secretly and in the night-time, is not altogether what an honest man should lend himself to!"

"Oh! I see," cried the other, "the old scruples coming up—the serf-feeling that these lordlings have ground into the people till it clamors louder than justice itself. You, Jones, are mistaking all this for conscience, and so fling away the only opportunity that will ever occur of regaining your own rights. Why, what harm can there be in a search after these papers; we will not take them away; we only wish to know that this lord can produce them when he is called upon!"

Jones began to waver again, the voice of the tempter was so gentle, his sophistry so plausible, that it seemed to charm away all the scruples that had possessed him a moment before: besides the presence of a second party had destroyed the holy influence which the profound stillness of night is calculated to produce. Hyatt saw that his eloquence was taking effect, and was urging him with fresh arguments, when the sound of rapid footsteps approaching, made the plotters draw close to the trunk of a tree, in order to conceal themselves.

"It is Manson going to my house," said Jones, with a sort of ferocious bitterness in his tone, "I thought that he would not let me stay from home an hour without managing to see Lucy—at this time of night too! I have a great mind to follow the scoundrel!"

"Secure the keys first," insinuated the soft voice at his side. "Why throw away the charms of a fine property merely to chastise a man who will be here after to-night, and always to be found!"

"Then enough, I can punish him any time!" cried the park-keeper, following the tall figure of Manson with a wrathful glance as it disappeared in the shadow. "Wait here for ten minutes, I will come back with the keys in that time, if the fellow has not taken them with him."

"Which all the saints I know of—forbid!" muttered Hyatt, seating himself at the root of a tree as his companion moved off. "I like those jobs best that are done softly—pistol shots and splintered doors create an excitement—after all that Smith says, a silky tongue is no bad instrument when bolts are to be driven!"

As these words died on his vicious lips, Hyatt folded his arms, and sinking against the oak, sat silent and motionless, and but for the sharp glitter of his eyes, that seemed to defy the darkness, might have been incorporated with the shadows that blackened everything around him.

Meantime the park-keeper, now fully excited to the performance of his errand, passed across the lawn—turned an angle of the house, and plunged into the flowery labyrinths of a garden that required both caution and time in crossing, for it covered a broad space of sloping ground, and the moonlight trembled over it full and clear till the most tiny blossom seemed bowed to the earth with a weight of liquid silver.

Down where those flowery walks lost themselves in the park, stood a little cottage embowered in fruit trees and latticed with vines. Up to this cottage came the old man, creeping through the carnations, the heliatrope and verbenas, tangled along the path, with the feelings and crouching attitude of a thief; twice he lifted his hand to try the latch; but that hand, hard with toil and brown with the sun, had never been raised in a doubtful act before, and the tough nerves trembled as they felt the cold iron.

The door was fastened. It seemed, at first, a relief to the old man, but he thought of Hyatt waiting for him in the wood, and looked around for some other means of access. There was a bed room at one end of the house—the single lattice sheltered by a cherry tree. Jones stood beneath the tree, whose laden branches drooped heavily around him, and looking up through the clustering fruit, saw that the window was partly open. Planting his foot in a fork of the young tree that bent beneath his weight, he lifted himself upward, flung the sash open and sprung into the room. Then, a moment after, he came through the window again, and parting the branches, set himself cautiously down without shaking so much as a ruby cluster to the earth, or planting a twig of the richly fruited tree. When he came into the moonlight, the face of Thomas Jones was pale as death, and grasping a bunch of heavy keys in his hand, he fled across the garden like one pursued by an avenging spirit. On he went, trampling through the flowers, and feeling at each spot as if the cold iron which he grasped so tightly was burning into his palm. He neared the manor house; then his speed was checked, and resuming a crouching attitude, he stole around a corner, peering up at the windows.

The house was very large, and a single light only streamed from the wing in which the housekeeper slept, with a few domestics, left to guard the premises. All the rest was in darkness.

"Is all ready?" whispered Hyatt, starting up as the old man came through the trees, pale and laboring for breath.

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"Come!" was the sharp reply, "the village clock is striking, in ten minutes they will shut up for the night."

In answer to this, Hyatt moved forward without speaking, and followed Jones as he proceeded swiftly, but with caution, toward the manor house.

"Hush! This door is always closed the last; I hear them fastening up at the main entrance. Ha! they are coming—turn into this passage." With these directions, given in a tremulous whisper, Jones pushed open a door that opened under a stone balcony to the garden. Hyatt followed into the house with a noiseless tread, and both found shelter in a dark passage leading to the kitchen, just in time to escape a heavy footed, sleepy man, who came from a neighboring room, with a light in his hand, and having drawn a couple of bolts across the door, sauntered back again, as if quite exhausted with the fatigue of shutting up for the night.

During, perhaps, fifteen minutes, the two men stood in the passage, listening to each faint noise made by the inmates as they retired for the night. Then they stole cautiously forth, treading many passages and antique apartments, lighted only by the moonbeams that streamed here and there through the windows, till they reached the main entrance hall. Here the light was shining full and broad over the floor of tessellated marble, and some antique ornaments that garnished the wall.

"It was arranged that we should let ourselves out at this door, if I remember right," whispered Hyatt, placing his lips close to the park-keeper's ear; "what if you draw the inner bolts and place the key ready in the lock in case anything should happen."

Jones nodded his head, and lifting the bunch of keys that he held to the light, which came through an open window, he selected the largest and attempted to fit it in the massive lock that fastened the outer door.

"Stop! your hand trembles; let me try," whispered Hyatt, putting his companion's hand quietly from the key, just as it entered the lock, and bearing both hands steadily down upon the iron, the arch rogue managed to shoot the bolt while he seemed to be burgling in his search after the keyhole.

"Then I had found it at last," he whispered. "So let what will happen, we have but to give a turn of the key and our way out is secured. Now for the deeds!"

Again those two bad men might be seen creeping up the old Elizabethian stair case, clinging to the rich carved work of the oaken balustrade, and treading close together, each holding his breath and longing to chide the other for allowing his heart to beat so loudly.

At last they paused by a door of massive oak, heavy with iron knobs. Jones again held up his keys in the moonlight, and selecting one that fitted the lock, slowly turned the bolt. The room which the two men entered, was small and dark. There was but one window, high up in the wall, and that was guarded by a lattice work of iron bars that answered all the purpose of a shutter without entirely obstructing the day light, though the more pale moonbeams failed to penetrate beyond a few faint struggles.

Hyatt put a hand into his pocket, and then the faint glow of a match revealed a small room lined with shelves and drawers, containing coffers and boxes, with some valuable articles of silver-plate standing loose upon the shelves.

"There select out the deed box, and let us find some place to examine it, where the light cannot be seen from the house," said Hyatt, handing a small lamp that he had taken from his pocket, and which, until the top was unscrewed, had every appearance of a common pocket inkstand.

Jones took a coffer from one of the shelves, while Hyatt held up the tiny lamp that the game-keeper might be certain that it was the box they sought.

"We will carry it down to the library and examine it," said the old man, glancing toward the window. "The shutters are closed there. I had forgotten how this window was contrived. Blow out the lamp and lock the door after me; I cannot do it with the box."

The light, as it went out, revealed a crafty smile that stole over Hyatt's lip. He had calculated all these movements before, even to the minutest thing. So as Jones went out of the state-room with the box of papers in his arms, Hyatt closed the door, and made a little more noise with his seeming efforts to lock it, than he would have ventured upon had the attempt been real. Jones waited till the key was placed in his hand again, for he was resolved to be very cautious—and then moved softly towards the library.

The library was a dim old room, heavy with oak carvings and crowded with antique book-cases, through which the gilded bindings of a valuable collection, gleamed out with peculiar richness—but the small lamp that Hyatt kindled, served only to give the faintest possible glimpse of the apartment. But this was little heeded by either of the persons present. After one keen glance around, in order to satisfy himself that no unguarded evidence would betray their presence, Hyatt put down his lamp on a rich, mosaic table,

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that stood in a recess, and took the coffer from Jones, who relinquished it with considerable reluctance.

The box was fastened by a small, brass padlock, and Jones was observing, with a glow of relief upon his face, that it might as well be returned, for there was no key to open it, when Hyatt, by a dexterous motion of the hand, which concealed some instrument unseen by the other, severed the bolt and opened the coffer. It was full of papers and parchment, while Jones stood leaning against the frame-work of a window, pale as death and exhibiting increased excitement, after the box was opened. Hyatt drew an easy chair to the table, and proceeded to remove the documents, one after another, from the box. At first, he proceeded with great coolness, but after a few minutes, his face also became anxious, and he seemed more earnest in listening for any sound that might arise from within the building than in search of the deed. Every thing was still in the old mansion, so still that the faintest rustle of the papers sounded audibly, and made the strong nerves of Thomas Jones creep, as it were, through his whole frame. Hyatt partook more and more of this agitation. He would pause over each paper when it was removed from its depository, and as minutes crept by, his face assumed an expression of keener anxiety. All at once, the parchment in his hand began to shake, his head was turned partly on one side, and spite of his evident exertion to appear indifferent, no one could doubt that every faculty was absorbed in listening to a sound that crept almost imperceptibly towards him from the great stair-case.

"What is that?" cried Jones, in a sharp whisper, grasping Hyatt's chair, and turning his white face towards the door. "It is a footstep; some one is upon us!"

"No, nothing of the kind," whispered Hyatt, and his face assumed an expression of indescribable relief. "At first I thought it was some one coming, but now I am sure it is only a rat in the wainscot. These old houses are always full of strange noises. Come, sit down, and let us examine the papers together; it will take a long time, for the coffer is crowded."

"Hush!" said Jones, starting again, "I am sure that was the cracking of a door!"

"Poh! You are frightened, man, I tell you; it is nothing of the kind; sit down, you will always hear footsteps, while you are listening for them;" and Hyatt unfolded a parchment hurriedly as he spoke, and the noise that he made overpowered any other sound, real or fancied, that had terrified the park-keeper.

Jones sat down, and planting his elbows on the table, remained gazing upon the face of his companion, as it was bent over the papers. The old man could not find resolution to touch one of them himself, and as he thought of the peril attending their position, the risk of shame which detection was sure to bring, he began to regard the move before him with absolute loathing. For half an hour the old man was lost in bitter emotions, while Hyatt proceeded, with great coolness, to examine parchment after parchment as it was taken from the box, apparently so deeply occupied in his search, as to think of nothing else. He had nearly reached the bottom of the coffer, when Jones started to his feet again.

"I tell you, some one is coming; I hear footsteps. There!"

Hyatt started to his feet, and his face turned white, for a sharp sound, as of something falling upon the stairs or striking against them, sent terror to his heart also. The two men stood close together and listened. Hyatt had lost all his coolness, and the unhappy park-keeper shook from head to foot. The faint glow of the lamp was just enough to reveal the deathly whiteness of each face, and no more. Another sound, less startling than the first, which seemed to be the cautious closing of a door followed, and then all was still again.

"It is nothing after all," whispered Hyatt, with a forced smile. "We are frightning ourselves with shadows; but you are getting too restless. In five minutes more, I shall have found the deeds, if they are to be found!"

"Be quick then!" said Jones, "for I will not stay here five minutes longer; I tell you, man, I am trembling like a thief; this is foul work, or it could not have made a coward of me! Close the box, I say, and let us begone!"

"I may as well," muttered Hyatt, casting the papers he held into the coffer. "There is nothing like the deeds we are after here. The old lord must have destroyed them!"

"Thank God for it, if he has!" replied the old man, "they would have been a curse to me, I know—for since they were mentioned, I have not felt a moment's peace. Shut the box, I will stay no longer!" With hands that trembled from an eagerness to depart, more than from fear, the park-keeper gathered up the papers and crammed them with both hands into the coffer; then forcing the side, he held it while Hyatt pressed the staple down into the padlock in a manner that concealed the injury that it had sustained.

Hyatt now seemed as anxious to leave the house as his companion. They went out from the library together right cautiously to the state-

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room, and depositing the box in its original position, locked the door and went into the principal hall. Every thing was quiet there, so Hyatt walking in advance of his companion, and after working the key a moment in its lock, opened the door, and they both stole through together, locking it on the outside.

"Now go and return the keys where you got them," said Hyatt, after they had entered the shrubbery. "I will wait for you where we met this evening!"

"I will," said Jones, firmly; "and mark me, young man, this is the first and last night's work that ever Thomas Jones is engaged in!"

The park-keeper waited for no answer, but struck across the lawn, and bent his way to the garden cottage.

Hyatt saw him depart, and a quiet sneer stole over his face.

"So be it, honest old fool," he muttered. "It is not likely that you can ever be made so useful again."

Three minutes walk brought Hyatt to a dingle of the park in an opposite direction to the place where he had proposed to regain the keeper. Here he found three men crouching among the fern. One of them started up and came a pace or two into the open wood.

"Is that you, Smith?" said Hyatt, drawing close to the man.

"Yes—yes! Is all snug up yonder?"

"Sound asleep as so many dormice; but what a noise you made."

"All owing to the confounded wine-cups that Blakely would insist on crowding into his pocket. Though we had all enough to carry," replied Smith.

"Blakely will always be a fool!" rejoined Hyatt; "his obstinacy came near spoiling the best job we ever undertook. I had great ado to keep that old fool Jones from breaking loose at the noise!"

"Well—well, all is safe now! Do you go with us up yonder!"

"No. You must take charge of that among you; see everything safely stored away, and then each to his own covert. I shall remain as I am to ward off suspicion; but these wine cups, are they of gold or silver?"

"One of gold, the other two silver!"

"Let me have them—I will account to the others—but they will serve a fine purpose. I cannot explain now: but get me the cups——"

Smith went down into the dingle where his companions lay, and brought three richly chased drinking cups in his hand. Hyatt concealed them about his person, and after a few more words of consultation, walked away toward the oak where he had promised to join the park-keeper. He found the old man waiting.

"Well, has all gone safely, Jones?" said the young man.

"Yes, thank heaven, it is well over," cried the keeper, wiping the perspiration from his forehead; "the keys are in their place again, and there is no harm done. Now, good night. It will be a long time before I go deed hunting again."

"Yes, we had better both get home," said Hyatt, reaching forth his hand, which the old man took but coldly; "another day we will talk this matter over. I do not despair of finding the papers yet!"

"It must be in open daylight then," replied the keeper, sturdily. "I have done with this creeping work."

"Well—well, we will talk it over soon—go home now. I will take a shorter cut to the village."

And so the young tempter and his aged dupe parted for the night.

Half an hour after Hyatt stole out from the among the vines that sheltered John Manson's cottage, and slunk away toward the park again. Half an hour after that he was mounting a rude ladder of ropes which fell from his sleeping room window at the inn. Then the ropes were drawn up, and all remained dark and quiet, as it had been since the young robber retired for the night some three hours before.

We must now pass over a few days! Pregnant were they with sorrow for our heroine, and with terror for many others! Where guilt had been little expected; where, on the contrary, confidence had always been reposed, the imputation of a foul crime now rested! Ay! and all believed the tale.

John Manson was in prison on a charge of burglary. The proofs were strong against him. With the keys entrusted to his care by a kind master, he was said to have entered that master's dwelling, in the night, and taken therefrom plate and jewels to an enormous amount. The proofs against him were fearfully strong. He, alone, had access to the missing treasures—some of the plate, an inconsiderable portion, but enough for evidence, had been discovered on his premises. Buried under a grape vine, near the door of his cottage, had been found three valuable drinking cups, engraved with his master's arms, and evidently just buried. His examination before the justice had been brief, but conclusive; so John Manson was cast into the nearest prison, there to await his trial.

One night—a single night of darkness and solitude—during which the strong heart of the

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prisoner had writhed in agony such as it had never dreamed of before, and the sweet dawn found him feverish and overwhelmed, body and mind, with the calamity that threatened him with ruin and disgrace.

But in the morning his dungeon was opened, and a fair young creature glided in. Her garments were travel-soiled with a long night's walk: and her soft eyes were heavy with that suppressed grief that eats so noiselessly into the heart. She looked weary, too, and her cheek was very pale.

John Manson was seated on his rude bed: his feet manacled together, and his face buried upon one arm, with the clenched hand pressing against his temple. Lost in agony, stupefied by the horrors of his position, he heard the door of his prison open without heeding it. The face of man had grown hateful to him. If the turnkey had come to bring him more food it was altogether useless, there was a pitcher of water and a loaf of black bread still upon the table close by, unbroken and untasted. So thinking it the turn-key with more disgustful food, the prisoner neither looked up nor moved. And there, with her limbs trembling and her heart full, the young girl stood gazing upon him. She saw the irons upon his ancles, the terrible misery expressed by his attitude; her lips began to quiver; her eyes filled. Softly and with the gentle action of a young mother stealing to the sick bed of her child, Lucy Jones took off her cloak and bonnet, and laying them down stole forward, and, seating herself by the prisoner's side, took the hand that lay clenched upon his knee between hers. He started up—his eyes fell upon that angel face—tears rushed into them, and he reached forth both his shaking hands toward her.

"Lucy—my Lucy!"

She too reached forth her hands, and her slender fingers clung to his. There was holy light glowing through the tears that blinded her—tenderness, love, everything that goes to make up the glory of a good woman's countenance, beamed in her look!

"A single word, John, before you take me to your heart forever—one word. Are you innocent?"

"So help me God, and all his angels, I *am* innocent!"

She fell upon his bosom, her happy sobs filled the dungeon.

"I knew it: I knew it," she murmured, clinging to his heart. "And now, John—my John—the God of the innocent is with us—all will go well. Take courage, John, all will go well with us!"

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

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HIT OR MISS.

BY P. HUDSON.

A REGULAR, go-ahead Yankee maxim which is in the mouth, and has made the fortune of more than one enterprising New Englander, is "nothin' like tryin'." Well, to be sure there is nothing like trying if you confine yourself to proper objects, and do not apply the maxim to games of chance. But the best proverbs, maxims, adages, and sayings, will be misapplied. The meaning of the Bible itself has been misrepresented by evil men. Many persons pounce upon some old saw that has been in every persons mouth for half a score of centuries, stretch its application to an extravagant degree to suit their purblind view of their own interests, and by making it their maxim through life, finally ruin themselves.

This is just what Charles P——— did. He was a friend of mine. And a fine, manly fellow he was too. He and I were school-fellows. His peculiarity was that whenever risking any great venture, he would stop, clap his finger very sagely to the side of his nose, and consider the chances pro. and con.; and if there was one in his favor, he would exclaim—"well, 'nothing like trying!' Hit or miss, here goes!" He certainly was the luckiest fellow I ever met with. He was almost uniformly successful. This rushing blind-folded into the midst of the territory of chance was bad enough in the small ventures of a school-boy; but as he made a further step in life it soon became evident that he was determined on his own ruin. The first time that he ever risked any money I recollect well. We were going out on foot, our resources not being very magnificent, to the distance of some seven or eight miles from the town where we resided, to visit friends of ours. We stopped on our way at an inn to speak with the keeper, with whom we were acquainted. As we were talking, a stout, hard-featured old farmer came lounging in with a goose hanging over his arm. He was returning from the market, so he told the master of the house, having sold everything but his goose. He wanted to get rid of it somehow or other with profit, but no one was disposed to buy. At length a raffle being proposed and eagerly agreed to by all parties, it was decided that there should be six tickets, at a quarter of a dollar each, and to be, as usual, shaken up in a hat, from which each would draw his lot. Three were taken by two grinning countrymen and a brisk miller; it was of course expected that I would take one. I felt, to be sure, much inclined that way; but on reflecting upon the chances against me, I came to the conclusion that I would not risk my quarter, which I could not afford to let go for nothing; besides I looked upon raffling as no better than gaming. My refusal disappointed the old farmer. He turned to Charles and presented him with a ticket, talking garrulously at the same time of the magnificence of his goose, and of the extreme probability there was of his drawing the prize. This eloquence I perceived had a marvellous effect upon him. He looked at me, but I shook my head gravely; then he looked at the goose, whose plump beauty produced such an intense and overpowering effect, that he actually began to count his money. He produced first a quarter of a dollar; then a dime; then a cent; and that was all he could show. He looked at his little store and sighed, and then at the goose and sighed again. At last he exclaimed, as usual, "well, hit or miss, I'll risk it." And so he did, and won the goose.

Shortly after this affair we separated, Charles going to New York, and entering a counting-house, and I to Yale to finish my education. During the interval that we were thus separated, I heard frequently of him. His rage for risking money on chance seemed to grow every day. He certainly did not exactly gamble, but he came within an ace of it, as will be seen from the following. A parcel of young men, five in number, made a wager with another parcel of young men, six in number, on the result of a boat race they were to have. The wager was three hundred dollars a side, to which each was to contribute fifty. As the first party wanted one to make up their number, they waited on Charles to persuade him to join. "We'll be sure to beat them," said they. "We are, to be sure, nearly matched in strength and skill; but then the boat we have engaged is as much superior to their's as the sun is to the moon, so that we can't help beating them. You will gain fifty dollars by it. You have only to put in your share to make up the wager of three hundred." Charles hesitated a long time, but as usual, it ended in his risking his money, "hit or miss." The boats were to start from a country seat on the island, a little above the city, to row up the river some distance, turn a buoy, and to come down again. Each party hired an experienced coxswain, and had everything complete before the eventful day which was to decide the fate of their several fifties. Of course it came very soon, and the race began in the presence of a good many people, whom the news had brought together. Our hero's party pulled with might and main, and, by the time they reached they buoy, were full two boats length ahead. Now came the display of skill in the two coxswains. Horrible

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to tell, that of the foremost ran the boat right against the buoy, and while the crew were engaged in reviling him, and in disentangling the boat, their antagonist shot far ahead and won. Their coxswain had been bribed.

In due time, Charles entered business for himself, while I commenced practising medicine in the same city. He was drawn into a great many wild speculations, all of which he rushed into "hit or miss," sometimes winning, sometimes losing. On the whole, however, he became rich; and in due time married a beautiful and wealthy girl, who died two years after her marriage, leaving him childless.

The slight check which she had kept upon his wild speculative disposition was now removed; and he soon turned his attention to speculations in stocks, by which several of his acquaintances had made large fortunes. He examined with attention an institution in which the stocks were at that time very low. He looked cautiously into the state of its affairs, and for the first time in his life acted with some prudence. He did not go headlong into the business "hit or miss." He saw that the institution was sound, that the stock *must* rise, and that there was no miss at all in the matter—it was all hit. He invested every cent of his fortune, about fifty thousand dollars. As he had forseen, the stock suddenly rose, he sold out, and found himself worth full eighty thousand. I waited on him among the first to congratulate him on his success, and I advised him to invest his ample fortune in real estate, and to retire from business. But I found him mad for speculations in stocks. Of course, with his admirable success, the sober sense which he had shown in his first disposition of his money, was gone. He could talk of nothing, think of nothing, dream of nothing, but speculations, speculations. He was convinced of his luck. He was a Cæsar, a Napoleon in fortune. He had never in his life lost a venture. I ventured to remind him of the boat race. Pugh! that was a trifle! The coxswain bribed and so forth. I went away deeply grieved, for I was certain that his ruin was at hand. I returned home, resolving in my mind all the different available stocks in which I now became so intensely interested as Charles himself, though from different motives. Two days after this, I received a note from my friend, informing me that he was going to invest nearly his whole fortune in a stock which presented more plausible appearances than even that by which he made his first speculation. I was now seriously alarmed on his account. I inquired all over the city, gathering what information I could with regard to this institution, and found that what I had suspected was the case; that it was rotten, the stock good for nothing, and the directors a pack of rascals, who threw a specious coloring over their affairs, so as to make them appear sound to persons, who, in matters of stock, were untaught like Charles. I went round to his house in the greatest anxiety, and pointed out to him the reasons why the institution was unsound, but my advice was received with poohs and pshaws, and to cut a long story short, he, "hit or miss," invested his whole fortune, with the exception of one or two thousand dollars in the pretty bubble.

Well, the result was exactly what might have been expected. The institution burst; the stock fell and fell, till it at length became totally unsaleable. Charles' fortune of eighty thousand was reduced to *two*. So much for "hit or miss."

The creditors rushed upon him like hungry wolves. Every thing was lost—every thing, except one horse—a beautiful and swift trotter, part of his former splendid stud, which I know not how he managed to save.

In this distress, he called upon me and imparted to me his mad plan for recovering his fortune, and his object in retaining the steed. He told me he knew a young man who had a good many horses, and who was eternally racing. He proposed to challenge him to race upon the road for a large sum of money. He was sure to win, he said; his horse was immensely superior to any the other owned. And in this way, by *gambling*, he was going to make a nice little capital to begin again the world. Again I took upon me the task of a mentor. I pointed out to him the guilty means he intended to pursue, and then the chances against him on the road; and then I advised him to sell his horse, and with the proceeds of the sale, and what money I could lend him, to go to some other place, to enter as clerk in a counting-house, or open a little store, or take some other sure and honest means of gaining money. But no—no—he must make money at once—he would'nt borrow—and he was sure of winning—and even if he were not, "win or lose, hit or miss, he'd risk it!"

Two or three days after this distressing interview, I was in one of the most romantic spots on the romantic road to S——, some miles from the city. The road was beautifully level. I was sitting on a stone bridge thrown across a ravine worn to a great depth by a stream which howled and tore through it with wild and terrible, though magnificent effect. The road, I said, was level: and it was remarkable, as the scenery was rather mountainous. I was sitting on the parapet of the bridge indulging in those pleasing emotions which fine scenery always

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induces in us, when I saw trotting furiously toward me two sulkeys. As they drew near I recognized *the* two racers; and "woe as me" Charles was full a length behind. I saw his eye. It was wild—almost insane; his face was haggard. The race was hopelessly lost, and nothing but debt and imprisonment remained to him. As he drew nearer he rose in his seat and threw a glance over the parapet of the bridge. Then first I saw his desperate, his impious resolve. I rushed forward to seize his horse—but too late—too late; he drove violently against the parapet, sprung over, down—down into the dark, boiling water beneath. That wretched suicide! His last plan had been deeply laid. His vehicle was dashed to pieces, and it was supposed it was an accident. No eye but mine saw the speculator rush, "hit or miss," into the presence of his Creator.

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SHOPPING WITH A COUNTRY COUSIN.: A SKETCH OF CITY LIFE.
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pg. 96

SHOPPING WITH A COUNTRY COUSIN.

A SKETCH OF CITY LIFE.

"Come, Bella," said a cousin of mine, who was making a short visit in town, "I want you to go a shopping with me, I have a light silk dress to buy for myself and Lyddy and Sally; and I want you to show me the best stores."

I consented, for I well remembered the kindness and hospitality with which I had been treated by my relatives, during a few weeks at their spacious farm-house, and sincerely wished to make some return. It was a warm day in June, and we started from the vicinity of Bleecker street to proceed to Stewart's, where I supposed my cousin Jane could not fail of being suited. As we entered she whispered to me—

"Now, coz, I am not going to be cheated by any of these Yorkers; I know their tricks, I guess, and they'll find me as sharp as they are."

We proceeded through long rows of stools occupied by ladies, and we reached the fartherest extremity and procured a vacant place, at the counter where the silks are displayed. She asked to see some silks.

What kind and color, was asked.

"Oh, I don't know," Jane replied, "you see," she said, turning to me, "mother wants us to dress alike, she says, nothing's so pretty as sisters all in a row dressed just alike—but Lyddy wants a crow color, and Sally likes a grass green, so I don't know what to do."

The courteous youth proceeded to unfold and hold to our view, piece by piece, of every shade and quality. Jane looked on with unwearied patience, but fixed on none. At length she perceived a piece of rich figured satin, which a lady near us was holding to the light. She suddenly seized one end and exclaimed—

"La! that's pretty, now I like that."

The fashionable dressed lady quietly resigned her hold, whilst she surveyed my cousin Jane, with a look which seemed to ask, "what curious species of zoology have we here." But Jane perceived her not, and asked the price.

"One dollar and three quarters a yard."

"Gracious me, for that narrow stuff!" she exclaimed, "I guess you'll take less—I'll give seventy-five cents."

"No, indeed, madam," he replied, "we have but one price for our goods."

But cousin Jane would not be convinced until after an hour's haggling—when throwing down the satin, she declared it too dear for her, and all the cheaper ones looked so ill after it she tossed them aside. We left the shop and proceeded

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through several others, where pretty much the same scene was acted over, until she was persuaded by one more elegant than the others, to decide on a slazy silk, neither the color, nor quality she desired. I endeavored to interfere, but was out-talked by the voluble shopman, and we departed.

It was a warm day, and cousin Jane was none of the sylph-like sort, she leaned heavily on my arm, complaining of weariness, and how the hard pavements hurt her feet. Every time we crossed the street I was obliged to rescue her at the risk of my own life, from the carriages and carts. She never looked to the right or left, but if I called to her, or pulled her by the arm, to warn her of any danger, she stopped, frightened and bewildered, stared at the prancing horses, who looked as if they could hardly avoid her. How she escaped, is more than I can tell. It must have been owing to the dexterity of the drivers. Tired and heated, we were half way home, when Jane said to me—

"Now, cousin, I want to buy mother's silk shawl, and the gloves for the girls."

"Why," I answered, "did you not tell me that, when we were looking for the dress, we must go all the way back again to procuro those articles."

"La! I did not know," said Jane, "I thought one place was as good as another."

"But the principal shops," I replied, "are all down town."

"Well, dear me, I'm sorry enough, for I'm tired out—my feet are worn out with these hard pavements. New York is such a dreadful, tiresome place, I wish I only was well out of it once."

There was nothing to be done but retrace our steps, so back we went through all the shops, until the shawl and gloves were purchased. I prevailed on Jane to get into an omnibus, to return home, as we were both excessively weary. But I soon repented this movement, for poor Jane was the victim of the greatest terror. Every time we jolted, she screamed, and was sure we were breaking down or overturning. In short, she afforded much amusement to all within, and many without by her shrieks and causeless terror. At length, when the vehicle was filled with passengers, the driver whipped his horses into a quick trot. Her agony was too great to bear, she was sure he was racing, and we should soon be dashed to pieces. In vain I endeavored to pacify her—she knew, she said, such things were every day occurrences in New York. They were used to having their brains dashed out, or limbs broken, but for her part she was not. Out she would go—so I pulled the check string, and we proceeded once more homeward. Our house was in sight, that haven of rest and refreshment, I quickened my steps, when Jane said—

"Where is Liberty street, cousin, is it near here?"

"No," I replied, "it is some distance."

"Oh, I'm very sorry," said she, "for I have got a call to make there."

"Impossible!" I exclaimed, "it is in the lower part of the city. If you had told me when we were in Maiden Lane, we might have gone there, as it is the next street."

"Well, how was I to know," she observed, "where Liberty street was—go I must, for mother desired me not to come home without going to see cousin McGrubbins, who lives in Liberty street."

"Dear Jane," said I, "you cannot, indeed you are too weary to attempt it."

"Oh, I must," she answered, "there is no help for it—this is my last day, and mother wouldn't like it a bit if I didn't."

"Dear cousin," said I, clinging to the iron railings, "indeed I cannot accompany you, I am worn out."

"Well, Bella," said Jane, "you know I cannot find the way without you. I'm sure I'm tired enough too, and it is no further than we went that day we walked along Horsetail creek to Lake Winnemapasquod."

I was silenced, for I well remembered the unwearied patience with which my cousins had explored the beautiful country in their vicinity, in search of the picturesque for which they had no taste, merely to please me. I cast one longing look at the house door. Then we retraced our weary way in a broiling summer's sun, once more down Broadway. In vain I entreated Jane to allow me to employ a hack—the very name drove her frantic. She knew, she said, too well, these hack drivers, she had heard enough of them. They had as lieve dash a body to pieces as not. One thing I insisted on, I demanded Jane's list in order to plan out our proceedings so as to take as few steps as possible. It was well I did, for I found several commissions still to execute, and places to stop at, which would have kept us all day, if I had not taken the precaution of consulting her list.

To those who have perused my narrative thus far, let me warn them, never to go a shopping with a country friend, without first knowing all the places they wish to visit, and plan out their movements accordingly.

To my country readers I would beg to remark that they should not be too exacting on the time and patience of others when they come to town.

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CLARICE DE SANTILEUR.: CHAPTER I.
BY JOSEPH A. NUNES.
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CLARICE DE SANTILEUR.

BY JOSEPH A. NUNES.

"To the sad heart sweet memories restore."
— SARAH WHITMAN.

CHAPTER I.

THERE was feasting and mirth at the Castle Terreville, and the numerous guests who were there assembled, at the invitation of its lord, vied with each other in their endeavors to outdo gayety itself. The meeting at the castle had already continued a number of days, and the amusements of each day had exceeded in variety and richness those that had preceded it. On the morrow, however, was to be the crowning festival, in honor of the bride elect of the noble baron, whose castle had been the home of all his friends for the period of the preceding week.

A tournament was then to be given, in which all the young knights and nobles of the province were expected to take a part, and shiver a lance for their ladyes' sakes; and the anticipation of the spectacle made many a bright eye light up with joyous expectation, and made the hearts of the youthful warriors more tremulous than if they were about to meet a mortal foe in the shock of arms, instead of encountering friends in mimic strife, where art and gallantry were alone to be displayed to those whose tender breasts would quake to look upon

the strife
That neither spares, nor speaks for life.

But the youth of the period in which we write were accustomed to view the fairer portion of creation in a different light from that in which they are now beheld. That was the age of chivalry and romance, and woman then was worshipped (at least by those in whose breasts youth lent a fire to love) as something apart, and superior in their nature to the hardy man, who was ever called upon to mingle in the turmoils of the times. This feeling it was that kept men from deteriorating in those days of semi-darkness, and which still gives to them that charm which allures us so frequently to turn back with pleasure to their consideration. And it was also this feeling which pervaded the bosoms of the young knights at the Castle Terreville when they prepared themselves, and issued their directions to their squires, for the display that was to take place on the morrow.

Not the least among the motives that made them all hope to do their devoir gallantry, was the knowledge that she—in whose honor these sports were given—was expected to preside as queen of them; for though she had been plighted in marriage, by her father, to the proud Baron

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Terreville; there was not one of them who could look unmoved on beauty such as hers. Indeed the whole province spoke with but one voice on this subject; nor was it within the limits of Lorrain alone that Clarice de Santileur was distinguished by the title of the Lily of Lorrain. Besides, the rumor was rife that high and noble, and brave too as was her betrothed husband, she did not favorably affect him; but that she shrank with repugnance from the day when the nupitials were to be solemnized; and pined in secret at the thought of the alliance. These considerations had such weight with the young nobles who were present, and so acted upon their admiration and their pity, that there was probably not a ladye faire in all France before whom they would have appeared with such mingled sensations as before her, who was to them an object both of love and mystery.

But amidst all these preparations—amidst all the turmoils of anticipation—amidst all the thoughts of joy, and throbs of expected pleasure—where was she, to do honor to whom these preparations had been made?

Let the reader accompany us to an upper room of the castle; it is a large and commodious apartment: the massive oaken furniture surrounds the apartment, which is ornamented in the usual style of ancient gothic architecture, and the tapestried hangings were displayed in rich profusion round the walls. At a window in this room, where antique carving seems to have resisted successfully the effect of time and decay, is seated on a large oaken chair a lady just in the pride and loveliness of first youth. Hers is a countenance that will attract attention, aye, admiration! and on that expression as her head reposes upon one hand which rests upon the casement, and the bright tear drop starts unbidden to that clear, blue eye, whose long and graceful lash retains the crystal drop—we could linger forever in melancholy thought. This is Clarice de Santileur. She cannot yet have passed her eighteenth year. The outline of her figure is the perfection of grace; and her face, with its pensive cast of thought, brings to mind the expression of some beautiful Madonna by one of the great artists. She is pale—very pale, with the faintest tint of color in her cheeks; but she is so transparently fair that the blue veins that swell her throbbing temples can be clearly defined; and it would seem as if almost every pulsation in them is visible. Her hair is of that rich, glossy gold color that is so seldom seen, but so beautifully when it is seen. So rich it is that it might be taken for the bright metal itself spun out into threads of impalpability. It hangs in luxuriant curls from that brow of purest marble. While those on the other side are swept back by a hand, whose whiteness, smallness and symmetry would form a subject for a sculptor's dream. Her dress is of crimson velvet, made in the fashion of the time, with long, loose sleeves which display the arm when raised to the elbow. From the open front of the dress there is seen a skirt of figured yellow satin, and the same vestment is observed above the neck, where it is fastened about the throat by a sparkling gem. Upon her head she wears a small cap or coronet, of black velvet, such as we sometimes see in the portraits of the unfortunate Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland; around which are two rows of largest pearls. This gives an air of gravity to her yet youthful brow, and adds to the melancholy expression her countenance wears.

But why weeps she when all around are rejoicing? Why does she seek solitude, and loneliness and grief, when all around are anxious for her presence, and all are filled with joy? She weeps those nuptials that now seem inevitable; and she mourns the absence of him to whom (or to his memory) she is still as constant as though they had never been severed.

CHAPTER II.

"And he wore a scarf of embroidery rare,
The last love-gift of his ladye-fair." SHAKSPEARE.

Eustace D'Onsellet, Count de Lisle was the son of one of the first noblemen of Lorrain. It happened that the castle and estates of his father adjoined those of the Baron de Santileur; and it also happened that the two noblemen were friends, and had continued so from early youth. Under these circumstances it was but natural that an intimacy should spring up between Eustace D'Onsellet, or, as he was always from childhood called, the young Count de Lisle, and Clarice, the only daughter of the Baron de Santileur.

They had been brought up as children together, (indeed from their infancy they had been betrothed by their parents) and as children they had learned to love each other, without knowing the meaning of their own feelings. The intimacy subsisted from childhood to adolescence, and the passion, which at first was but childish affection, ripened at length into the tenderest love. It was one of those fortunate instances of early betrothments where the views of the parents subsequently made the happiness of the children; and where young hearts followed in the direction pointed out by mature heads.

Eustace had always been accustomed to call Clarice his little wife, and she had always been taught to look upon him as her future husband,

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and as soon as they began to understand the meaning of these terms, they hailed with joy the selection that their parents had made. Situated as they were and had been; there were no concealments on either side—there was no affected coyness on her part; nor did he keep the most hidden thoughts of his soul a secret from her—they felt that they loved each with the tenderest passion, and they did not hesitate to confess it.

Things were in this condition when the father of Eustace D'Onsellet died, and left him sole lord of his extensive estates. Eustace was then but a few months more than nineteen years of age, and Clarice was not yet quite fifteen, and the period when they were to be married (when she became eighteen) was yet some three years distant.

This event—the death of his father—had a great influence upon the fate of the young Count de Lisle. He loved his parent with the most devoted attachment; and the loss of him preyed upon his spirits, and for a time cast a deep gloom over his disposition.

It was a short time previous to this that the celebrated enthusiast, Peter the Hermit, had commenced preaching the first crusade. Europe rang with the preparations for this war. France, England, Italy and Germany were marshalling their thousands, to transport them to the shores of Asia. Godfrey de Boullion, Duke of Lorrain, accompanied by the flower of the nobility of the province, was already on his way to Italy, whence he was to embark with his followers for the place of ultimate destination. Religious phrenzy was at its highest point, and all classes seemed eager to participate in this conflict, in which, besides the glory to be obtained, the cause of true piety was to be so effectually served.

As we have said before, it was at this time that Eustace D'Onsellet had the misfortune to lose his only remaining parent. He had ever been among the first in the manly and graceful sports of the period; and the skill he displayed in the use of his arms, so won the applause of the older knights, that they already prognosticated for him an active and brilliant career.

Though in person but little above the middle height, and possessing a slender, but graceful and well proportioned form, his strength was surprising, and his daring was at least equal to his strength. He would have been among the first to join the Duke of Lorrain, his liege lord, had he not been restrained by that passion which is more potent than even ambition. But his love for Clarice de Santileur detained him a captive.

When, however, his parent was no more, and a gloom settled upon his spirit, the thought of the "War for the Cross" forever recurred to him; nor did the idea want prompting from without to give it additional weight.

The Abbot of Cairvoieux, who was his confessor, true to promoting the views of the Mother Church, continually urged it upon him as a duty he owed, not only to himself, but also to his deceased parent, until at length his suggestions were adopted, and all other considerations gave way before them. He set himself to work to prepare his retainers for the expedition, and in the course of a few weeks he saw himself at the head of three hundred followers, all equipped to join Godfrey de Boullion.

It was agreed between the young count and the marquis, that on the return of the former from Palestine the nuptials, so long delayed, should immediately be celebrated.

Clarice had wrought her lover a scarf with her own fair hands, which, when he was leaving, she placed about his person.

"It is unbecoming a noble maiden," she said, as he locked her in a tender embrace, "to bid thee avoid danger, but oh! be not wildly rash! for my sake—for the sake of one who will then be far, far away—be not too daring and headlong in thy courage."

Eustace promised all she asked; but qualified the promise by declaring that ere he returned, he would have a name in the roll of chivalry that she would not blush to hear repeated.

"And this," she said, placing the scarf around him, "you will wear, dear Eustace, for my sake; and when your thoughts are truants," she playfully observed, "turn but a look on these folds, and think my heart is interwoven with the silken threads."

"My own sweet love, and lady bright!" he replied; "not while this heart acknowledges one throb of life, can my thoughts wander from thee. Willingly I accept the pledge as a gage of thy affection—it shall ever be borne where honor is most to be gained, and it shall never be parted from me—unless Clarice (which cannot be) thy thoughts should wander to another, and thy heart should seek some different shrine than mine:—then would I return it to thee, and with it thy pledged faith; and then seek for myself under the cowl and in the cloister that home which elsewhere had been made desolate."

"Then it will never leave thee, dearest!" she replied, as she suffered her head to fall upon his shoulder, and she looked up with her eyes beaming with affection in his face.

They parted. Eustace D'Onsellet joined his forces to those of the Duke of Lorrain, and was just in time to embark with him for the capital of the Greek empire. He took a prominent part

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in the earlier actions of the crusaders. At the seige of Nice he first earned for himself a name of honor among those celebrated warriors whose exploits he shared; and in the subsequent encounters with the infidels, under their Sultan, he added fresh leaves to his wreath of laurels. But at the siege of Antioch, where his daring spirit led him to be foremost in the attack, he was wounded by the enemy, and being separated from, and unsupported by his followers, he was taken a prisoner by the Caliph of Egypt. The Christians gained the city, but Eustace D'Onsellet remained a captive in the hands of the infidels; nor would they agree to his exchange. They had already learned to dread his name—they had learned the force of his arm, and the influence of his battle cry, and they preferred detaining him a prisoner.

For a year and more after he had left his home there came at intervals, news to the Castle Santileur in relation to his exploits. Fame spoke loudly of him; nor did she need messengers to bear her report into the heart of France. A pilgrim returning, occasionally, (as there were frequently such) was sure to speak of those warriors who had distinguished themselves, and among them the name of the Count de Lisle was by no means the last mentioned. How wildly did the heart of Clarice throb as she heard these persons—some of whom had seen him—speak in his praise; and how did she tremble—notwithstanding her pride in him and the heroism of the age—at the thought that his intrepidity might deprive her forever of himself, and widow her heart ere she had even been wived! But after the first year or little more, these reports ceased for a time; and then the rumor came that he had been taken prisoner, and that he languished in captivity among the infidels. This report was succeeded by the story that he was dead; and though this rumor was never confirmed, yet every one believed it to be true except Clarice only; she clung to the hope that it might be false, and though she mourned him as dead, she still in secret cherished the thought that he would one day re-appear to contradict the assertion, and to claim her promised hand.

Another year passed away, and still no tidings reached the Castle Santileur of the existence of Eustace D'Onsellet. The news it was true had not been confirmed; neither had it been contradicted; and nothing occurred to shake the confidence of those who believed that he was no more.

At the commencement of the third year, the Marquis de Santileur received from his friend, the Baron Terreville, a proposition for his daughter's hand. The Baron Terreville was a widower of about forty-five years of age, and he was the wealthiest and most influential nobleman then in the province of Lorrain. His wife had been dead some five years, and he sought to mate himself to another; not that he was in love!—that was by no means the case; for the baron, though a brave man and a tried soldier, had never possessed a particle of romance in love affairs; he thought they should be transacted entirely through the medium of parents and guardians. He was of the old school, and a martinet in that school. He considered that a daughter's first duty was obedience; and that she had no right to permit her affections to be engaged, unless her hand had been pre-engaged by her parents; and that it was her duty, when they disapproved of such engagement, to withdraw her love with the same facility she had bestowed it.

The Marquis de Santileur made the proposition to his child; but she shrank with horror from it. The marquis wished, if possible, to please his daughter; but the family and estates must be represented; and it was absolutely necessary to his happiness that Clarice should marry. He asked her if she had a preference for any noble of the province before the Baron Terreville. Clarice, upon hearing this question, poured out her whole heart to him, and entreated him not to consummate her wretchedness by compelling a union, when she could never love any but him who had possessed her love from infancy; and who, if he was no more, had borne it with him to the grave.

"If he is dead," she said; "earth has no longer any claims upon me, and the only request I make to you is, that you will consent to my retiring from it and seeking a refuge in the cloister, where I will ever mingle your name with his to implore blessings on you both."

But the Marquis de Santileur would by no means consent to this arrangement—neither prayers nor entreaties could move him. The utmost grace his daughter could obtain was, that he would wait for a period of six months, during which time she should not be considered as absolutely plighted to the Baron Terreville; but if at the expiration of that period, Eustace D'Onsellet did not return, or they heard no news to render the fact of his existence certain—then, at the expiration of another month, she should positively be wedded to the man who now sought her hand.

This was at least a respite; and from day to day she continued to hope that something would intervene to prevent a doom she looked upon as worse than the grave. Week passed after week, and everything remained in the same condition

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as at the commencement of the term of probation. Hope waxed so faint that it required all the sanguineness of youth to support it. At length the six months expired, and Clarice de Santileur was in despair!—the fate of Eustace D'Onsellet was as much involved in obscurity as ever. What was worse, however, she could no longer remain true to his memory—she was the betrothed of another!—not by her own act or acquiescence, but by a power that was paramount to hers—by the authority of her father, who fulfilled his word given to the Baron Terreville.

Moreover the marquis had accepted an invitation for himself and daughter from the baron, to spend the first fortnight of the month that was to precede the marriage at the castle of the latter; and it was the fulfilment of this engagement that explains the appearance of Clarice de Santileur at the home of one, from whom she would willingly have been leagues away.

Abandoned by every other hope, our heroine still had one remaining when she left her home for this visit; and that hope was in the baron himself. She thought of appealing to him, and declaring that she could never love him—that the union could but make her miserable existence one of utter wretchedness—and of conjuring him, by every principle of honor and nobleness, to relinquish voluntarily the engagement into which parental authority had forced her. But this hope, like the many others she had cherished, was not destined to be realized. The baron was a plain man, of few ideas, which he expressed in almost as few words. He told her that had her first lover survived, or could he be revived, he would acquiesce, though reluctantly in her suggestion—"for," said he "I loved the boy myself, and it was from me he received his first lessons in the noble art of war. His father (as good a knight as ever bestrode a steed or couched a lance) and myself were companions in arms; and I would have done much to serve the brave lad." But he said that it was madness to suppose he lived; and it was the excess of madness to adhere with such tenacity to his memory. He then read her a short lesson upon the duty of a daughter, and concluded by declaring he had no doubt that after they were married she would learn to love him, as his endeavors should all tend to her happiness.

It was now that Clarice felt within herself a spirit not her own: her determination was made —*she would not wed the Baron Terreville*— though the whole world combined to compel her—she would not! She formed a resolution so desperate, that she dared scarcely breathe it even to herself. She resolved to let matters progress, but when called upon at the altar, to refuse her consent to a union her heart could not sanction, and to avow herself (in wish at least) as the bride of heaven and the church; and should force be attempted, she determined to terminate her struggle by sacrificing herself to death, rather than to contamination.

CHAPTER III.

"We return, we return, we return no more."
— HIGHLAND LAMENT.

THE morrow broke forth in all the splendor of a bright, spring day—there was not a cloud in the whole expanse of the sky. Nature seemed dressed in her gayest garb—as if she rejoiced with the light hearts that had been looking forward to this day with so many pleasurable anticipations.

The morning was spent in preparation, and at two hours after noon the sports were to commence. It were needless to occupy the time of the reader with the description of a tournament —so many have already been described by abler pens that we will pass by the minor arrangements, and come to the tournament after the sports had progressed for some time, and when Clarice de Santileur had already taken her seat as queen of the lists; though it must be confessed she did this act mechanically, and remained for a time no more than an inattentive spectator of the scene around her.

The Baron Terreville had just unhorsed a knight with whom he had run a course, and he stood at the entrance of his pavilion in expectation of another opponent, when a trumpet was heard to sound a call at the entrance of the lists; and the herald on proceeding to answer it found there an armed knight accompanied by his squire, bearing his lance and shield.

The latter, in explaining the reasons of the summons, stated that his master, as he journeyed through the country on his return from the holy wars, had heard of the meeting; and passing in the neighborhood at the time, he wished to break a lance with the noble knights there present, in honor of the lady of his love, whom he upheld to be the fairest in all France.

A challenge such as this, in those days, was never declined, and in a moment all were anxious to meet this stranger, who, by his boasted preference of his own lady, cast an aspersion upon the peerless charms of all others. Baron Terreville, being in his own castle, was compelled to allow several other knights, being inferior in reputation to himself, the privilege of encountering the stranger before him.

The herald was directed to return and reply to the unknown challenger, that on giving his

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name and lineage, the knights there present would be proud to meet him; and they would uphold the superiority of their ladies' charms in peaceful strife there; and in deadly war elsewhere—with sword or with lance; on horse or on foot. The squire replied that the knight he served was under a vow, and he could not reveal his name nor his family; but he pledged himself that he was noble, and not unknown to some who were there present. He was known now by the title of the knight of the Blasted Pine, as the cognizance upon his shield (which was a young pine tree riven by a flash of lightning) showed, and if they accepted his challenge he would meet them there, with the weapons prescribed for the occasion, and elsewhere as they should list, and with what weapons it suited them to name.

After a few moments spent in deliberation, they accepted the challenge, and the knight of the Blasted Pine, as he denominated himself, rode into the lists. He sat a powerful and spirited war-horse; and was clad in a suit of complete steel, over which he wore the white crusader's shirt, with the bright red cross upon the right shoulder. As he kept his visor down it was impossible to form an opinion of his countenance; but his figure was at once manly and graceful, and displayed an admirable combination of strength and ease. His appearance alone would have commanded respect; but he evinced so much skill in managing his restive steed, and in wielding his lance as he saluted the queen of the tournament in passing below the platform on which she sat enthroned, that respect was quickly changed to admiration; and every one admitted that there could be no doubt of his being both noble and gallant.

Clarice de Santileur had aroused herself from her listlessness the moment she saw the stranger knight enter the lists. The sight of the cross, and the white shirt over his armor, recalled to her mind the thoughts (if they had ever been absent) of him who was similarly clad when last she bade him a long farewell. There was also something in the figure and appearance of the knight of the Blasted Pine that attracted from her more than ordinary attention. But the face could give no information to the wild thoughts that suggested themselves to her mind—the envious bars were closed, and she could but see the flashing of the dark eyes they sheltered. A state of painful anxiety had now taken the placce of utter heedlessness in her bosom, and she waited in torturing suspense to see whether the entrance of this stranger did not purport more to her than it had promised in words.

The knight of the Blasted Pine proved himself as skilful in action as he was graceful and gallant in deportment. Knight after knight he overthrew, or gained such advantages over them that they retired with the acknowledgment of their inferiority. At length when the ambition of most of them had been quelled, the Baron Terreville advanced to redeem the laurels which his companions' want of success had wreathed around the brows of the stranger.

The Baron Terreville was a powerfully built man, and, as has already been expressed, he was a tried warrior: the contest, therefore, between the stranger knight and him enlisted much more interest than any which had preceded it. The stranger knight also seemed to feel the importance of this encounter, for he threw from him the lance he had already used, and in its place he selected another from among several handed him by his squire. The trumpets sounded, and each knight started from either extremity of the lists: they met midway, and the shock was tremendous. The lance of the Baron Terreville was aimed full at the breast of his adversary—it struck and shivered to the head: not so that of his antagonist. Aimed at the head, it seized the helmet just above the visitor, and bore both horse and man back with it—the fastenings of the helmet kept their wonted place, and in less than an instant both steed and rider rolled to the earth together.

To disengage himself was the work of only a moment to the baron; but he had been severely bruised by the fall, and was, therefore, in no condition to renew the encounter. He complimented the stranger knight on his prowess, and invited him to dismount, in order to receive from the hands of the queen of the tournament the prize appointed for the victor of the field. The knight of the Blasted Pine would at first have declined this honor; but finding that his doing so would be considered uncourteous, he threw the reins to his squire, who was already at his stirrup, and alighted on the ground. He was conducted by the baron to the platform where Clarice de Santileur sat as queen of the tournament, surrounded by a bevy of fair and young ladies. As he approached her he knelt on one knee, and she took from a maiden beside her a gold chain, to which was attached a diamond cross, and threw it around his neck.

"Sir knight," she said, "receive the reward of valor; and let it be the incitement to brave deeds and noble actions: keep thy honor as pure as the metal that encircles thee, and let thy faith be as clear as the gem that clings to it. Be true to thy God—thy country—and the lady of thy love."

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"To the first," replied the knight, pointing to the red cross upon his shoulder, and speaking in a voice that was tremulous with emotion, "this will prove my truth—the second will ever be dear to me—and the last," said he, in a low, husky tone, "is as of the things of the past. The title that I bear is but the symbol of my heart—loving still, though seared and withered in its affection." He rose hastily and withdrew, but as he remounted his steed Clarice, who had kept her eyes fixed upon his person, saw, or thought she saw, the end of a scarf peering from beneath the over-shirt of white he wore. That glance, transient as it was, convinced her (when taken with the tone of the voice and the confession she had just heard) that she had seen; nay, that her own hands had been employed in ornamenting it *for him*, who was still as dear to her heart—aye, dearer! than when she fastened it across his breast, and bid him recur to that and be faithful to her.

Oh! what would she not have given to have spoken one word, to have pronounced one name, to have asked one question! Worlds, had they been hers, would have been freely offered for this simple privilege; but yet she dared not do it. Custom with its iron rules forbade it; and she was compelled to control the desire, though her heart might burst in the effort.

The stranger knight saluted the company courteously, and took his departure as he had arrived—unknown and unrecognized. With his departure terminated the amusements of the day, and with the day terminated the visits of all the guests at the Castle Terreville. On the following morning the Marquis de Santileur, accompanied by his daughter, and her own recognized husband, the baron, took their departure for Santileur, where the latter was to remain until the nuptials had taken place.

CHAPTER IV.

"They were gathered for a bridal."
— Sarah L. P. Smith.

The intervening fortnight sped rapidly by—too rapidly; at least Clarice thought so; for on either side she saw "a doom to dread, yet dwell upon," and every moment brought her nearer to it. No one had heard again of the unknown knight. He had passed from the memory of many; but Clarice de Santileur returned again and again in thought to him, and at each recurrence she became more convinced that his fate and hers were connected.

It was now the morning of the wedding, and the bride's maids were already in attendance on the bride; she silently submitted to their direction: nor word nor comment fell from her in relation to the preparations then in progress, nor to him who all expected would be her future lord. The toilet was almost complete, when one of the maids brought in a small package and handed it to the bride: on the outside of it was a piece of parchment, on which was written the name of Clarice de Santileur. Tremblingly she undid the silken threads that bound it, and as she did so there fell from it the identical scarf she had, at parting, given to Eustace D'Onsellet. One glance of mingled wonder and recognition she bestowed upon it, and then fell fainting in the arms of an attendant.

On recovering, she immediately requested to speak alone with her father. She showed it to him, and told him her suspicions that Eustace D'Onsellet and the stranger knight at the tournament were one and the same person, and she implored him to break off the nuptials; or at least to procrastinate them. The marquis inquired how the packet was received, and being informed that a horseman had left it at the castle gate, and after delivering it had departed as expeditiously and mysteriously as he came—he declared it was all a trick got up by some designing knave; and refused to accede to his daughter's request. She pleaded, but he was deaf to her entreaties.

"It will be but hurrying your child to a grave!" she exclaimed, as she fell on her knees before him.

"Be it so!" he replied, now becoming highly excited at this unexpected resistance to his wishes; "a dirge or a marriage song shall this day be heard, or I will cease to be the lord of Santileur." Saying this, he rushed from the apartment.

"A dirge, be it then!" cried Clarice, as she rose from her suppliant position, and from a private drawer drew forth a small dagger which she carefully concealed in the folds of her dress.

The party proceeded from the castle to the chapel of the monastery hard by, where the abbot in his robes was in waiting to officiate at the ceremony. Slowly the procession moved up the aisle. Clarice was as pale as a corpse, and with difficulty supported herself by leaning on the arm of her father, who evidently was in no placid mood. The Baron Terreville walked by her side, stern and stolid; and the friends and company brought up the rear. In this manner they approached the spot at which the abbot stood prepared to receive them.

The service was already in progress, and the priest had just pronounced the formal question —as to whether any one there present knew of any impediment to the marriage contract about to be consummated—when a noise as of the

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clanking of armor was heard from behind one of the many gothic arches in the chapel, and upon the instant there appeared, issuing from the gloom, a knight clad in complete steel, and wearing the habiliments of a crusader. He had advanced but a few steps when every person recognized him (though he still wore his visor down) as the knight of the Blasted Pine—the hero of the tournament. His appearance and recognition were simultaneous; but the attention of the bridal company was quickly withdrawn from this new object to a scene of a different character that was passing in their midst; and which filled them with consternation and surprise.

Clarice had prepared herself for the crisis of her fate when the priest should ask this question; and on hearing it she collected every energy she could command, and, without noticing the interruption to which we have briefly adverted, she took a step in advance. Stopping the priest in the midst of the ceremony, she protested that the union then being completed was one that could not be acceptable to heaven, and should not be insisted on by man, and, therefore, the rites of the holy church should not sanction it. She declared that neither her heart nor her mind consented to it: that she was either the plighted bride of another, or—if the privilege of remaining so was denied her—then she devoted herself to the service of heaven; and she claimed the interposition of the church to rescue her from so unholy an alliance.

Nothing could now exceed the astonishment of all present. The baron looked confused and annoyed, the bridesmaids and company were dismayed; and the abbot suffered his book to fall from his hand, while he stared in stupid wonder at the marquis for an explanation of this extraordinary scene. The marquis himself was nearly frantic with rage—he seized his daughter violently by the arm, and dragging her before the priest, declared, "that either with or without her consent the marriage should take place." Here, however, his violence was met by another interruption that tended to increase the confusion already become general.

When the stranger knight had heard the declaration made by Clarice, he passed hastily by those who interposed between him and the priest, and making his way as speedily as possible, he stood face to face with the marquis just as the latter had succeeded in dragging his daughter to the altar. At this sight the hand of Clarice, as it sought the fold of her dress, was suddenly arrested, and she gazed at the stranger as though he was some supernatural agent sent to her relief in her greatest need. The intruder, without noticing the frowning brows that lowered on all sides upon him, walked directly up to the priest.

"I," said he, in a loud voice, "forbid that these nuptials proceed, and declare that maiden —the victim of an unholy purpose—is, as she proclaimed, plighted before God and man as the bride of another."

"That other is no more!" cried the Marquis de Santileur, turning fiercely upon the stranger. "He is dead—his bones are bleaching upon the sands of Syria!"

"He lives!" replied the knight—"he lives to claim the troth once plighted, and to make pure his own faith."

"And where?" asked the Baron Terreville, now advancing for the first time.

"Here!" replied the knight, throwing up his visor and disclosing the well known features of Eustace D'Onsellet, Count de Lisle.

"Eustace! my lord—my lover—my husband!" cried Clarice, hysterically, as she rushed into his offered embrace.

"I have lost a fair bride," exclaimed the Baron Terreville, offering Eustace his hand when the confusion had in a degree subsided, "but I have found a friend. I resign, sir knight, in favor of your stronger claim, backed as it is by the preference of the lady."

The party left the chapel without a wedding having taken place, but with the understanding that when it did occur the bridegroom was to be him whose claim was paramount to all others. The night of the day that dawned so inauspiciously was one of unalloyed joy to the lovers. Clarice would have Eustace recount to her all his adventures. He glossed over those of which she had already heard, and only particularly narrated the history of his captivity and escape. He dwelt pathetically on his thoughts of her during his imprisonment; and he detailed how a few months before, when the fortress in which he was detained a captive was attacked by the crusaders, he rushed from his prison, and seizing the scimitar of his jailor, joined the assailants, and with them assisted in the capture of the place—how he had united with his companions in arms before the walls of Jerusalem—the Holy City, and the part he took in the storming, which immediately succeeded his arrival—how, after the city had been won from the infidels, and he had worshipped in the holy places, he hastened his return to France; and how, on arriving in Lorrain, he had heard of her betrothal to the Baron Terreville, and considering that she was false to him, he determined to retire from the world—how on learning that the tournament was to take place, he resolved to be present

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and judge for himself whether her heart went with the match, or whether it was one that had been forced upon her—how, on seeing her at the tournament, and observing her pale, sorrowful countenance, he had come to the latter conclusion, though he still doubted his own judgment —how he gave her evidence of his existence by having the scarf conveyed to her; and how he determined to be one of the party at the wedding, and there to act according as circumstances should seem to require. These incidents, though we have narrated them in a few words, engrossed their conversation during the remainder of the day and evening; nor was it until midnight that the lovers separated—their hearts overflowing with gratitude and love; and with a bright hope of the future beaming in unclouded splendor upon them.

The marriage of Clarice de Santileur to the Count de Lisle took place the following week, when the Baron Terreville officiated as the friend of the young bridegroom, and every one admitted that he looked happier and better pleased with himself and all around him than he had done the previous week, when the relative position of the parties was so materially different.

Need we say that the bride and groom lived happily together? The star that had beamed upon their union shone undimmed upon them for the remainder of their lives.

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MY FIRST PARTY.
BY A. BLACKSTONE.
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MY FIRST PARTY.

BY A. BLACKSTONE.

"CHARLES you must go with me to Mrs. Brown's to-night," said my pretty cousin.

"I! Why, Ellen, you know——"

"That you have never been to a party before, I suppose. So much the more reason why you should go now. Here you are eighteen, and half through college. It's high time to make a beginning."

"I don't know what under heaven I should do there."

"What all the other young men do; talk to the ladies."

"I'm afraid I couldn't do much that way. To tell you the truth, I haven't small talk enough to go to a party."

"Vastly complimentary! But suppose you pull down your towering intellect a little, and condescend to lay aside your books for one night, and mingle with us ordinary mortals on a footing of equality. It won't do you any serious injury."

"But, Ellen, I have no invitation."

"Because Mrs. Brown did not know you were here. If she had heard of your arrival in town, she would certainly have sent you one. Don't you remember she gave you a general invitation last winter?"

I was not altogether convinced by this logic; but my cousin was determined to take no excuse. Finding escape impossible, I resigned myself to my fate, and went to Stewart's for a pair of white kid gloves.

Parties and balls have always been my especial detestation. I have often wondered why they were invented; and after many profound cogitations on the subject, could only find these two reasons; first, to enable ladies and gentlemen of fashion to kill time; and secondly, to afford a sort of market, where young women may be shown off to the best advantage, and young men most readily entangled in the snares of Cupid and Hymen. Now touching the first of these motives, I never find the hours hang heavy on my hands. "*Ars longa vita brevis.*" "Art is long and life is short," or as translated by Longfellow, "art is long and time is fleeting;" and I have always quite as much to do as I can manage. With respect to the second, I have never been exactly matrimonially inclined, and least of all just now, when it requires all my energies to support my single self. Heaven knows what I should do with a wife.

The eventful hour of my "first appearance" drew nigh. I arrayed myself in full dress suit,

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with pumps and silk stockings. I abominate pumps, they seem to have been invented on purpose to cripple the wearer. If they are tight, you are kept in continual torment; if loose, they threaten to slip off every moment; and you are forced to manœuvre about in them like a cat shod with walnuts.

The man who first introduced dress-boots deserves to be enrolled among the benefactors of the human race. But on such occasions they were not generally worn. So I crowded my feet as I have said into a pair of pumps. Having performed my ablutions with the most scrupulous care, and ascertained by divers surveys that I was as I should be in every respect, I emptied about half the contents of a bottle of cologne upon my white 'kerchief, took a moderate draught out of the same, (I mean the bottle) by way of inspiring myself with a little Dutch courage, and then drawing on my new gloves sallied forth.

Now behold us, myself and cousin, entering Mrs. Brown's well filled parlor! I heartily wished myself home again; for, in spite of the cologne, I felt a sort of all-overishness, which, as the novel-writers say, "can be more easily imagined than described." I am sure it was not modesty nor bashfulness, these are commodities with which I was never overstocked. I could even then at an examination rattle off an extempore translation of a passage which I had never before seen, with such rapidity as to puzzle the professor completely; or hold half an hour's altercation in the recitation room with the tutor, on the proper reading of a line in Homer; and since that time I have delivered lectures, addressed political meetings, called on particular friends to borrow money; and performed various other acts which require an extra quantity of assurance. It was the sense of utter unfitness for my present situation of being completely "*ineptus*," as the old Romans used to call it; it was the consciousness of being as much out of my element as a shad would be on the top of a tree. I hate to be a cipher any where; here I was the veriest of ciphers.

We had exchanged the usual civilities with our hostess; my cousin was surrounded by a group of beaux, and I stood still and silent without the slightest idea of what was to be done next. A young man approached in a claret-colored coat, yellow gloves, and blue cravat. He was one of those cousins or nephews who are always "on hand" to make themselves "generally useful." Mrs. Brown introduced him: we bowed and shook hands after the most approved fashion.

"Do you dance, Mr. Howard?"

"Ye—es, that is—I believe I know how."

"Let me have the pleasure of introducing you to a young lady," quoth he, and taking possession of my unresisting arm, he dragged me through the crowd half across the room, and presently came to a sudden halt in front of a Miss, apparently some fifteen years old.

"Miss Morrison, allow me to have the pleasure of introducing to you Mr. Howard?"

"Good evening Miss Morrison," said I, executing a bow with all the grace I could muster. Off shot my evil genius in yellow gloves, leaving me *sub cultro*.

Miss Morrison murmured something in reply which I did not hear; then she looked down at her feet very sentimentally, and presently the little foot moved. Miss Morrison continued to contemplate her shoes with remarkable assiduity; while I, to keep her company, took a comprehensive survey of my pumps. In this situation we stood for some minutes; I waiting very politely for the lady to open the conversation, but finding no indications of a disposition on her part, I at length made a desperate attempt.

"Very warm evening, Miss Morrison?"

Miss Morrison replied in the affirmative.

"But it was warmer yesterday," continued I, vigorously following up my first movement.

The lady assented to this proposition likewise.

There was another long pause. I began to feel fidgetty. My ears, which I felt growing red, were stunned by the incessant clatter of tongues everywhere around me. The more I desired to say something, the more I didn't know what to say. At last an idea flashed across my mind, and was instantly pressed into service.

"Have you seen the exhibition of the National Academy, Miss Morrison?"

"No, sir, I have not!"

This was a complete damper. I was utterly nonplussed. Happily at this moment was heard the call, "gentlemen take your partners for a cotillion." I led off Miss Morrison to her place, trying to recollect as much as I could of the steps which I had learned three years ago from our colored servants.

Jingle, jongle, jungle, went the piano.

"Forward two," quoth the M. C. "pro tem," and off started the dancers. I believe I trod on my partner's toes occasionally, and once or twice came near running over a very small young lady who was my "vis-a-vis." But, on the whole, things went off as well as could be expected.

Anything for a change as the vagabond said when they took him to the watch-house. The company decided that it was too warm to dance, (I had been of that opinion for some time pre-

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vious) and determined to have a little music by way of variety. Accordingly demand was made on a young lady, who, after declaring, first, that she never sung; secondly, that she did not know how to sing; and thirdly, that she hadn't practised for six months, finally marched up to the piano in grand style. I took Miss Morrison "in tow," as a sailor would say, and sauntered in the same direction, on the principle of what mathematicians call the "sufficient reason," to wit, because there was no particular motive for my going anywhere else. The fair performer after turning over about two dozen songs, at last succeeded in finding one to her taste. My eye accidentally caught the title. To my great surprise it was not an Italian but a beautiful Scotch ballad.

The diffident *artiste* commenced. She lengthened out the sweet strains as if she never could have enough of them, like a fly crawling through a pot of honey. Annoyed beyond measure by the performance, I leaned against a corner of the wall, and sought the last refuge of the miserable.

I was awakened by a grand crash. A young lady with any amount of mouth and a very small quantity of nose, was doing execution on the unfortunate instrument at the rate of twenty knots an hour, and letting loose upon society a vast number of words in some unknown tongue pitched in the shrillest treble; while a young gentleman with one side of his collar standing up and the other turned down, was accompanying her in the deepest kind of bass. I listened out of pure astonishment, and soon distinguished the words, "dove, dove, dove," in the loudest conceivable tone, amid terrible thunderings of the piano.

Now it is not surprising that hearing these words so often repeated, I should have felt some curiosity to learn their meaning. I looked anxiously around in hope of discovering some one from whom the desired information might be extracted. To my great relief I recognized two old schoolmates whom I had not before observed.

"Can you tell me what dove means?" I said.

"Do-veay? (I knew nothing of Italian, and he knew less) why 'go away!'" to be sure.

Not feeling quite certain of the correctness of this version, I applied to the second.

"Do—ve? I believe it is the Italian for dove," and with this lucid explanation I was obliged to rest content.

The duett like all other sublunary things came to an end in the course of time. Some one else meantime had made way with Miss Morrison, and I was left to my own resources. First I stood still in one corner for a few minutes; then I walked over to another and stood there; next I tried to listen to a song which was being murdered, but the instinct of self-preservation soon compelled me to retire to a respectful distance. Then I trod on a lady's toe, and begged her pardon for so doing. Even this little incident afforded me great relief.

Suddenly a fan was dropped, I sprang forward like a young comet, nearly diminishing an exquisite who was advancing for the same object, seized the fallen article, and turned to present it to its fair owner. But just at that instant a waiter entered the room with a tray of hot stewed oysters. In turning, I ran against him, he fell over, and the contents of the tray poured headlong, a perfect cataract, into the lady's lap. There was a scream—a rush.

But I heard no more. I darted from the room, and have never been at a party since!

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LIFE IN A VILLAGE.*

BY N. W. WHITE.

Every body knows more or less of the peculiarities of life in a village. What a meagre monotony of every-day business is perpetually presented to view; especially if the place be intersected by none of those mighty internal improvements, for which we, as a nation, are at this time, lamentably proverbial abroad! There are no quick transitions from one scene to another to relieve the mind. To the resident, it comes to be, after a few years, one continuous succession of the same revolutions; like the simple circular motion of a mill-wheel, which delights at first, but soon wearies with its sameness. You may start out early in the morning, *pedestrianate* the live-long day, within the precincts of your laid-out villa; and you meet, identically, the self-same objects that you met in a thousand similar promenades.

You see none but the faces you have seen so frequently; which, at last, from their very familiarity, become painful to see. Here are the same, old, ricketty cart; and the same old, blind, lame, ugly horse; with the same old, unique, opinionated driver, that have plodded your only street, almost from time immemorial. Here are the same, time-discolored stores! The merchant's and mechanic's signs you have mechanically read so often, that you can specify, accurately, the blemish or beauty of each individual letter, a hundred miles off. Here are the same locust shade-trees, unaltered from the hour you first beheld them; and you are intimate with every branch and twig—nay, can enumerate each separate leaf. Here are the same flag-stone pavements, placed only occasionally on the side-walk—they are so acquaint to your ken, that you can point out faithfully each one the darkest night; or compute their area without the aid of mathematical instruments, or the science of figures. Here are the same ragged, little urchins that you regularly see per diem; and you know, with painful certainty, the ancestry and blood-relation of each—how many marbles, tops, balls and hoops each wily rogue has—which miniature sled belongs to each—how much it is worn—and how often he has mounted it, in winter time, to sail, dare-devil like, down your sloping street—you know each rent or patch the juvenile rascal has in his roundabout or pantaloons. You know what each young chap's father's avocation is—how indolent or industrious he is—what quantum of work he will do in a given time—where and how he lives—when he was married—whom he got—what kind of a wife she makes—whether neat and tidy, or a miserable slattern—what his religious tenets are—whether he is Whig or Democrat—and if you meet him in the street, before you come within speaking distance, you are aware of the expression that will diffuse his features—in what way he will shake your hand—what the tenor of the salutation he will give; and in your invariable and universal interrogation—"*What's the best news?*" you have anticipated his answer long before he has time to utter it—"*Why, nothing strange, I believe!*" You are quite conversant with his gait; and can "monstrous certain" predict his approach, by hearing his step.

These are a few, and very few indeed, of the unvarying incidents, that every day flash in your face with agonizing monotony. There are the antiquated tavern stand, with its topsy-turvy, cracking sign-board, and the low, shattered, doggerel hut, and the cake and beer shop, and the uncupolaed meeting-house, and the "mighty old" log school-house, and the comic little post-office, all decorated with out-of-date circus, and other hand-bills, and the queer little doctor shop, and a "great heap" of etceteras, that I have shrunk from portraying. There they stand, one and the same, from year to year, from generation to generation, blackened and blackening in the tempests of time! No change! A medley, that is renewed every morning, and stationary as the everlasting hills! There's the doctor! You can tell every patient he has visited for the last "twelvemonth"—what was his complaint—how often he was bled—how much *marcury* was prescribed—what was the exorbitant bill the Doctor charged—how the man disputed it—what "'stoundin' hard" names he called the doctor—how the latter sued him—and all that! If you ever hear a strange noise, you stop, incline your ear, and listen—ah! it is the ringing tehink of the doctor's mortar and pestle; he has got a new patient; more *alloways*, and *roobarb*, and *senna* and —— mercy on him!

There's the cabinet-carpenter! You know how often he uses his saw—who—and what for—who 's getting a table, or bureau, or bedstead. There it goes, the blacksmith's ringing hammer—ring, ring, ring, with the old son of Vulcan, making his clock-work obeisance to that uncomplaining anvil, the first time for weeks. And there comes our redoubtable post-boy, "as I'm alive." Now hurrah and jump up for ever! Well, what of it? He only stops a minute. There are no papers taken here; and he has, as our P. M. says, "no letters for nobody," as usual.

*This sketch will make the reader smile. Cannot some of our fair readers say a word for "Village Life."

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The only things that can create a sensation here, are, the arrival of the post-boy, a patient for the doctor, or a stranger from abroad. But these godsends are, emphatically, so "few and far between," that, long before they are renewed, you have sunk into a comatose lethargy, each one for himself; and the only combination of feeling and words is in the wonder, "what *will* come next?"

And thus, from day to day, and from year to year, will you wash away the essence of your life, in an unvarying, sluggish, turbid current. In time you will almost learn to love the sight of the illiterate old cobbler, whom you can dimly decipher through the dust-covered, cobweb-worn window of his one story, crazy domicil, hammering soles on his belabored lapstone, with the patience of job. Pat, pat, pat, from morn till night—pat, pat, pat! Persevering old man! He began the world poor, resolved to be rich. He has toiled half a century in the prospect; and is as poor yet, as the biped of a certain notable personage we read of in biblical biography!

Once in a long time, mayhap after an interval of years, a stranger suddenly appears in your midst. And then what a bustle, and whispering, and wondering, and screaming, and quizzing, and wretched suspense follows! Whether he be a patrician or plebian, every body is on the alert to find out some particular to communicate to his or her neighbor. If he be the former, infinitely more "terrible" will be the flood of conjectures set afloat as to who he is—where he came from—where he is going—and what is his business. And if the poor fellow happen to be a young, unmarried man, "dreadful" will be the havoc made with each movement he makes, and each word he speaks. The veterans will shake their heads, seem a Solomon in wisdom, and be "powerful" cautious how they tolerate him amongst them; the youngsters will all be eager to make his acquaintance first; the elderly matrons will incidentally ask "wonderful" questions" about his looks, &c., casting a positive glance to one or more of their female children "on the carpet;" the young ladies will spring to the door, as he passes by, look after him for a long time, scrutinize minutely, then go back to their mirror, and have all sorts of funny feelings whilst arranging themselves before it, with the most fastidious exactness, so as to be "cruel nice;" and the dear, innocent, village gossips, will meet in solemn conclave, discuss his merits, and compare notes, with the gravity of ancient seers. Of course, there is no ostensible call for their meeting, but the sequel soon reveals all. Miss Curious, a fidgety little thing, soon exclaims,

"La, me! I do wonder who this strange young gentleman is that came to town lately? He stopped at Mr. Toppington's Hotel, and has been there two days already! I do wonder!"

"I don't know," said Miss Lookout, a large, blustering busy body; "but our Samuel says, that Peter Quizus says, that Alphonso Findemout says he heard the young man say to the bar-keeper that he was from Philemedelphy."

"Bless my heart!" cried out Miss Flatus, of a "certain age;" a sharp-nosed, thin-lipped, span-form, very pedantic maid; "he must then know my brother William, who lives there, and keeps an extensive shoemaker's shop."

"Very likely, aunty," replied Miss Levitus, with a sly, cunning leer. "But I would like 'amazin' well to know if the widow Templeton is going to invite him to her party next Thursday night?" and she turns successively to the company, each member anxious and inquiring.

"To be sure he's invited," shouts Miss Fearnought, at the top of her voice, as she bursts into the room; a sizeable, loveable, heedless, volatile maid—"to be sure, for I saw him, myself, talking with the widow's son, this morning, before our steps." She emphasizes the latter part of the sentence, and then stops abruptly, as if she has unwittingly disclosed a "powerful secret," leaving the company to judge which one of the named gentlemen had made her a morning call.

"Well, he's a fine looking man," says Mrs. Flirtil, a lately married romp.

"And has such fine eyes."

"And pretty whiskers."

"And beautiful teeth!"

"And is so neat!"

"And walks so nice! &c. &c. &c.," exclaims the ejaculators in rapid succession.

In fine, they canvass him elaborately amid sparring of words, ambiguous hints, and concealed loves and fears; and they disperse, exhausted, inwardly praying for "next Thursday night" to come round on express. Probably before that time arrives some one has seen the poor, unsuspecting victim leave town in a "dreadful hurry." Before twenty minutes the whole population knows the casualty—all their fond hopes are blasted in the bud, and they never hear aught more of the "mysterious young man." In time things find their level again. The sickening routine of every day life will stare you in the face more horribly than before. There are the same houses and dull signs; and men and boys; and cows and dogs; and pigs, and cart, and driver, blacksmith, cobbler, doctor, post-boy, and post-master, and all, all, all—oh!—oh! it is worse than solitary confinement!

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THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

CHAPTER III.

Gloomy and deserted was the park-keeper's dwelling three nights after the arrest of young Manson. A faint rush-light only glimmered on the hearth, sending a few pale rays out upon the oaken floor, and leaving the rest in darkness. The sky was burdened with clouds, and the moon lay buried among them, giving no light through the windows, and rendering all things around sombre and oppressive. Just as the old clock tolled forth the hour of nine from its dark corner, the door was pushed open and Thomas Jones entered his dwelling. He had evidently been walking for sometime, and with a reckless disregard of speed or distance, for his gaiters were soaked with dew and studded with burs that could hardly have been gathered in the well kept park; drops of perspiration stood upon his upper lip and streamed from his forehead, and, as he took off his cap, the hair beneath lay matted and wet upon his massive head. The old man glanced toward the rush-light, and seeing that it was exactly as he had placed it, turned away and sat down near the window. But the close air seemed to oppress him, and, flinging up the sash, the unhappy old man folded his arms on the sill, and thus smothered the groan that burst from his lips.

After a few minutes the old man lifted his head and cast a haggard look around the room. "She will come again; she cannot have left her old father forever," he said, and the rough tones of his voice were broken with anguish. "I have deserved it all—but my child, my only child, she should not have left me!"

Again the old man buried his face upon the window sill, and it was plain to see by the heaving of his chest and the broken sobs that struggled to his lips, that tears had at last been wrung from his stout heart. They did him good—those warm, blessed tears—the moment he allowed them to flow freely his grief was relieved. So he indulged in them awhile, and then arose to his feet calmer than he had been for many hours.

"She may come back even yet," he said, gazing toward the hearth, and putting the light on one side while he raked open the ashes and began to kindle a fire. "She will be tired and hungry, poor thing—and I—oh, if she but comes back—I shall be hungry too once more."

He bent down and began to blow the coals with his lips. There was a noise—the light sound of a footstep approaching the door. The old man's heart leaped within him. He started and leaping forward on his knees, with one broad hand pressed upon the hearth, turned his face to the door. The pale rush-light gleamed over it, revealing a world of strong emotions busy with the features as he held his breath and listened.

It was a footstep—faint and unsteady with fatigue. The old man sprang up, opened the door, and reached forth his arms, a sound half sobs, half laughter broke from him. His child was there—her arm around his neck, her cold lips upon his cheek—but so weary that she could scarcely stand alone.

"My child—Lucy, darling—I thought that you had left your poor old father—forever and ever. Come in—come in and tell me where you have been. You do not know, Lucy, how wretchedly I have missed you. I have not slept an hour, or tasted a mouthful since you went away! What did you think I could do without my child? Where have you been?"

"Where should I have been, father, but to him?" said the soft, low voice of Lucy Jones. "I thought that you would know where I was without telling."

"But it is so far away—how could I think of it, Lucy—how could I think anything but that you could never love your poor, harsh father again, and so had gone away to let him live and die alone!"

"Oh! father, father—surely you did not think that. He was in prison—I could not rest and know it. His prison must be a long way off, for I can hardly stand now—but it did not seem

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so when I was going or coming back again. Let us go in, father, for I have good news to tell. John is innocent—the charge they bring against him is false—he told me so with his own lips."

"I know it is—I knew it from the first," replied the old man, turning his face aside, for the light shone brightly from the fire-place, and the large, soft eyes of his daughter were turned earnestly to his. "I believe before heaven that you, my child, are not more innocent of crime than John Manson. He has been a victim—the victim of a stubborn old fool, and—and—. But come in, Lucy—come in, the right will prevail. Now that you are here I shall be strong enough for anything. Now, darling, sit down in your mother's easy chair and rest a bit while I warm up some milk and make a posset. We have no wine left, but a dash of ale does as well. I will get the silver cup that your mother used to feed you from when you were a little baby, Lucy daughter."

Lucy did not answer, for completely overcome with fatigue, she sank into the chair, and had scarcely strength to untie her bonnet when her head fell on one side, and her eyelids closed.

"Poor thing—poor thing. It is enough to kill her!" cried the old man, stopping as he passed the chair to kiss her pale forehead. "Oh! if her mother were but here——" The poor man paused at that name, and his countenance fell—"and if she were here," he continued, in a tone of bitter self-reproach, "would she not ask who had brought her child to this—if the harshness of her own father had not done it? No—no, I am glad her mother is not by to join with my own heart against me."

Lucy neither moved nor seemed to breathe as the old man bent over her from time to time, when he passed to the cupboard for ale, sugar, and nutmeg, which he compounded with the pearl white milk that frothed and foamed in the silver cup upon the coals in the fire-place. When the snowy curd was parted in rich masses from the amber whey, the repentant man sat it upon the window sill to cool, while he spread a cloth over a little round stand which had been her mother's, and drew it close to the chair in which poor Lucy was resting.

All was ready, and yet the weary maiden remained in a repose so profound that no noise seemed capable of arousing her. The old man spoke to her aloud, raised her head with his hand, pressed against her cheek, and at last shook her gently. Her eyes were unclosed at last, and with a faint smile the young girl got up. Taking the proffered spoon in her trembling hand she languidly tasted the whey. The first mouthful seemed to revive her, and the old man's eyes began to sparkle as he saw that the nourishment he had prepared was bringing back the color to her cheek and lips, while his gentle child partook of it with still increasing relish.

"Father, you are looking ill, and tired as much as I am," said the maiden, at length lifting her eyes to the old man, who stood by her with his arms folded, and watching with satisfaction every mouthful she took.

"No, no—I never was better in my life."

"And I—how strong this supper has made me! I must have been very hungry, father!" said the young girl, looking around with renewed brightness in her face—"very hungry indeed to have forgotten that you are standing all the time, and that there was neither dish nor spoon for any one but myself."

"No matter," replied the old man, passing his hand caressingly over her head. "I had no appetite till now, and there is quite enough left in the cup. Just lean back in your mother's chair, Lucy, and tell me all that has happened since you went away, while I finish up the posset."

The old man drew a seat close to the little stand, and soon accomplished his task of emptying the silver posset cup that had been brought forth, for the first time in years, to honor his daughter's return, and Lucy, reclining gently in her chair, related all that had passed during her visit to John Manson.

"And now, father," she said, at the close, "I am promised to him—believe him to be innocent—knowing him to be friendless, the pledge which I have given becomes more binding and more sacred. Though the courts make him guilty—though they transport, nay, murder him upon a gallows, I will be his wife. If he suffers disgrace I will share it. If he dies I will be at his side!"

"He shall not die—not even a hair of his head shall be touched," cried the old man vehemently. "I have sworn it—and my oath shall be performed, though I bring disgrace, poverty, death on myself. You shall be his wife, Lucy, but to share neither his disgrace nor death!"

"Father, what do you mean? What know you of this affair? How can you aid John Manson? Tell me, father, I beseech you tell me, what hope there is in store for us!"

"I will tell you, Lucy, for I want some one to advise with, and now that your mother is gone, who else have I trust but her child? I will tell you all that has happened, and then we must consult and act together; I will have no other friend, and you will not blame me too

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much—for I am humbled in my eyes enough already. You will not reproach me, Lucy?"

"Oh! father," cried the young girl, and tears sprung to her eyes. "Did *she* ever reproach you?"

"No, no, nor had she cause—not such cause as the present at any rate—but I have been a fool—a dupe—everything but a villain, Lucy, that he could not persuade me to be. Oh! Lucy, Lucy, if I had but taken your advise and kept clear of that oily tongued scoundrel!" The old man started from his chair and began to pace the room.

"I know who it is that you mean," said Lucy, in a faint voice. "He is even now aiding the attorney to find evidence against Manson!"

"He is!—he is!—the hound!" cried Jones, and his footsteps fell fierce and heavy upon the floor.

"He has already forced himself into Manson's dungeon," said Lucy, "but John refused to speak before him. He professes to act as agent for the absent lord."

"He is a villain—a double dyed villain. Oh, if I could but prove as well as say it," cried the old man, "but I will! God can help me—the very stones would find voice to help me in this just cause. I may perish—I may bring disgrace upon an honest name—but the innocent shall go free. The guilty shall suffer—I have sworn it."

Lucy gazed on the excited old man: his unusual energy seemed to have swept all traces of fatigue from her face; she sat upright and grasped his hand between both hers.

"Oh! father, tell me all! Tell me how his innocence can be made clear!"

The old man paused, covered his face a moment, and then, drawing close to his child, told her all his weakness, all the experience of that time when he had been so completely under the influence of young Hyatt. She heard him, though now growing pale as death, again flushing red with shame for the hallucination that seemed to have possessed her parent.

"And you are convinced," she said, at length, "that this story of the deed—the claim on the estate was all a fancied one?"

"From beginning to end," cried the old man, almost fiercely. "I was a dupe—a fool—but it is over now: he shall find me as cunning and wary as himself. I will track him like a pointer day and night, early and late he shall find me upon the scent."

"And I," said the young girl, while her soft eye kindled, and her form dilated with noble resolution: "I can, perhaps, do something. Oh! father, this will all turn out well—I felt it from the first: now, now I am sure of it."

"I have been out to-night," said the old man, glancing at his saturated gaiters, and crouching under his window like a hound, "he shall not move, or look, or speak, that I will not know it all. Now get to bed, Lucy, and I will go forth again. I had no resolution when the house was empty. Now he shall find me firm as a rock, active as a squirrel. Good night, child, I may not be home before day, but go you to sleep. The ale posset has warmed me through and through, and my old heart is all in a glow again now that its darling has come back."

Lucy did not attempt to stay him, but throwing her arms around his neck, kissed his weather-beaten cheek.

"Good night," she said; "good night, and God bless you. I shall not be so tired or sleepy that I cannot pray for you and for him. To-morrow we shall both be strong again."

"To-morrow: perhaps everything will be set right by that time," said the old man, cheerfully, and taking his fowling-piece from a corner—"good night again, darling," and he went forth into the night full of thankfulness and strong with hope.

It was now somewhat after ten. The sky was still heavy with clouds, and, but for his knowledge of the place, Thomas Jones could scarcely have found his way through the blackness that fell everywhere around as he bent his course toward the village. The little public house at which Hyatt lodged stood near the stream which we have described, and disconnected from the other houses. Jones drew cautiously toward this building, and sitting down under the shelter of a clump of alders, with his gun planted between his knees, kept a vigilant watch upon one of the windows, through which a light was streaming. He had been upon his fast perhaps three quarters of an hour when the light was extinguished. The window was softly opened, and with a beating heart the park-keeper saw a dark body descending slowly toward the earth. Directly after the figure of a man came creeping through the darkness, and passed the watchful game-keeper so near that a hand stretched forth to grope its way pushed aside the gun-barrel, evidently mistaking it for the stem of a tree. The old man remained perfectly still, holding his breath, and allowing the gun to sway in his hand when it received this unexpectedly thrust. But after the figure had advanced a pace or two in the darkness, he arose very cautiously and stole after it, winding in and out along a circuitous footpath that led to the stables. Here he paused, for the stable-door was open, and the person whom he had been tracing came forth, leading a horse by the bridle. Jones saw

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the man creep, as it seemed, up the side of his horse, and then ride away at a very slow pace, which it was easy enough to follow.

Hampered by the darkness and ignorance of the road, the horseman proceeded with great caution, and after him, noiseless and quietly as a shadow, went the park-keeper. Step after step along the highway, under the dense trees, and out through the mouth of the valley into the heath which we have mentioned in another chapter. Here the horseman quickened his pace a little, and after him, resolute and still, always keeping at the same distance, went the park-keeper. Across the heath, and buried in a depth of blackness beyond, the old man perceived a light gleaming like a single spark of fire, and toward this he saw that the horseman bent his course as they left the open plain. Now the road become steep and rugged, and the horse's hoofs clattering among the stones rendered any caution regarding the sound of his own footsteps superfluous with the old man. The ascent was steep, and the horseman quickened his speed; after him toiled that tough old man, resolute as a hound, with the perspiration starting at every pore, and his teeth set hard together, which gave a sort of hissing sound to his breath as it came panting through.

All at once the horseman paused by the side of a black mass, that in the darkness seemed like some steep crag overrun with verdure. The old man looked on high, and as it were through a cleft of the rock, still glittered that spark of light which he had seen from the heath. He paused also, and, shrouded in the gloom, watched the motion of the horseman. He dismounted and moved closer to the rocky mass. Then the old man on his track again, stole through loose fragments of rock, along what seemed the base of a cliff, then through into its heart and up a flight of broken steps. Now the old man knew that it was some building that he had entered, for overhead was a sound of voices, and half smothered laughter mingled with the metallic tinkle of drinking cups in riotous motion. Faint glances of light too shot here and there from a crevice in the stones, and along the ruinous stair-case he could see the man whom he had followed so perseveringly, creeping up and up like a cat.

The old man shrank back into an angle of the wall, and waited to see what would follow. There was a shout from the stairs, a sharp oath, and then the rugged masses of stone were illuminated by a glare of light, and three men rushed out upon an upper platform, laughing, swearing, and protesting that they would drown the intruder in a tub of wine if he made such a noise.

Jones could see each man of the group distinctly. The tall one bending downward with a light, the other two holding together as if to keep from staggering off the platform, and laughing with a drunken chuckle at the new comer, who crept slowly upward on his hands and knees. The light streamed full upon his person as it mounted the perilous ascent, and, with a glow of keen satisfaction, the old park-keeper recognized to a certainty that it was young Hyatt writhing himself like a serpent along the broken masses of stone. He saw the young villain reach the platform, where the tall man clapped him triumphantly on the back. The others seized him each by an arm, and the whole group disappeared, leaving only a ray of light shooting between the stones and the sound of their voices, now greatly subdued, by which the old man could judge of their exact position.

The stout old explorer had no patience to wait. Scarcely had the others disappeared, when he began to mount the same tottering pass that they had taken. The stones vibrated beneath his weight, and the darkness was intense; but Jones was a man of courage, cool and deliberate. He tried every step before his foot was finally planted, and fastened his hard fingers in the wall with the force of a grappling iron at each advancing movement. At length he stood upon the platform which formed a sort of passage, separated from a compartment of what he now saw to be a ruined tower by a massive wooden door, which seemed to have been recently repaired, and a wall riddled with chinks, from which one had but to tear away the moss in order to command a view of the room. This was but the work of a moment for the park-keeper. Scarcely had he reached the platform when he was down upon one knee, a tuft of velvet moss lay crushed between his fingers; and his eyes, glowing like coals of fire, were applied to an aperture which he had thus speedily opened for himself.

A strange scene was going forward in that little tower-room. Upon the ivy branches that coiled over the ceiling and along the wall, half a dozen lamps of chased silver were swung. One of the purest alabaster, with a network of the most exquisite gold filagree shooting from it like the rays of a star, swayed to and fro with a festoon that fell from the ceiling, kindling up the glossy leaves all around, till the whole room seemed to tremble with delicate light. Beneath this lamp several fragments of stone had been rolled; across them were placed two broad planks which formed a table, on which was a repast that filled the whole tower with its savory fragrance. Hares, pheasants, cold beef

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and fruits were all heaped in dishes of chased gold and silver, interspersed with goblets, one or two of which were rimmed with precious stones.

A pair of massive tankards brimming with wine had overflowed, leaving a copious deluge on the rude table; for though the viands had remained untasted in expectation of Hyatt's coming, his companions compensated for this tax upon their courtesy by an application to the antique tankards that had stained their sides with many a blood red rivulet.

And now around this table so rudely magnificent sat the three robbers, with Hyatt in their midst. Astonishment, anger and apprehension were all depicted in his pale face as he gazed upon the scene; and he refused to sit down at the table, though the younger members of the band were both attempting to force him toward a block of stone placed at the head of the table.

"Are you mad? Has success driven you all insane?" he said, turning fiercely upon the men who had hold of him, and shaking them rudely off. "What fiend possessed you to drag all these things from their hiding-place, to light this old pile of stones up like a watch-tower? You at least, Smith, should have known better!"

"It is no fault of mine; I knew nothing of the matter till they had the eatables here. After all where is the danger? We have choked up every crevise which threatened to let out the light; and this old rook's nest fortunately has no close neighbors."

Hyatt was about to make some sharp reply, but his arm was that instant seized by Blakely, who, with his canary colored vest spotted with wine, his fancy cravat twisted loosely, and his dove colored nether garments soiled at the knees, presented the most vivid picture of a rollicking dandy just on the verge of intoxication.

"Come, come, my fine fellow, no grumbling; we come to have a night of it; sour faces want frighten us. Here we are all captains, you know: set down and take a pull at the old lord's tankard; wine, by Jove, you never tasted anything like it in your life, mellow as a peach, fragrant as a nosegay! Isn't it, Smith: why, look at Smith, it has made even his hooked nose blush like a peony. Here—here, drink out of the tankard sparkling from the fount; hang all goblets *I* say."

Hyatt pushed the dandy rogue away—as he lifted one of the tankards and held it toward him—with a violence that sent the wine with a dash over his delicate garments.

"I want no wine!" he said, sternly.

"Why, man, what folly," replied the other, gently holding back a glossy moustache that darkened his upper lip with one hand, while he applied the tankard to his own mouth. "Why the stuff has ripened in the vault of some monastery hundreds of years ago, I'll be sworn."

"I care not where it ripened," said Hyatt, "or how it came here; we met on business, not for a drunken frolic!"

"Why hang it old boy, I can see no great harm in the matter," said the other young man, taking the tankard from Blakely and applying it to his own ruddy mouth. "Ripe drink never comes amiss, or a good friend either: Blakely and I have managed this blow-out, and we 'won't go home till morning.'" The last words were half sung, half spoken, while the fellow had his mouth half drenched with wine.

"You see," persisted Blakely, stooping to dry up the moisture on his garments with his white handkerchief; "you see, old boy, we had a fancy to sup in style once in our lives. To make a dash with our gold and silver plate before it is knocked into a lump for the receiver, and we will, that's settled."

"I thought we had come here to divide the plate," said Hyatt, turning toward Smith; "we cannot undertake the risk of a meeting every night, I can tell you!"

Smith drew him on one side, close by the wall where our friend the park-keeper was listening, and whispered a few words in his ear.

"I tell you it is better to give these young sparrow hawks their will. They are getting keen after a full share of the spoil; once blinded with drink, and we can settle things after our own way with them. You understand!"

Hyatt smiled, and turning toward the others, said in a cheerful tone—

"Well, boys, as you have taken the trouble, we must run the risk. Carve away, Blakely, while I fill the goblets. Here take the head—we are only guests."

"That is something like!" cried Smith—"come draw around and let us hear how the young lord's plate can jingle; a breast of that partridge for me—all right. You are the prince of carvers, Blakely."

"Faith, I only wish we could eat from half a dozen plates at once; when one eats from gold he should have two or three fellows in livery at least behind his chair. This hardly seems the thing after all."

"Nothing could be better," cried Hyatt, who now seemed to enter, heart and soul, into the scene. "A little more of the jelly."

"Delicious, isn't it," said Blakely; "some of our fellows near Manchester paid a maiden lady one of their pleasant visits the other night. The dear old soul had been frightened by a report of

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robbers in the neighborhood, and packed all her plate and money off to the bank. So rather than come away empty handed, we ransacked the wine-bins, and carried off a jar of the precious old creature's jelly. Fit for a prince, isn't it—taste the wine again! Bless her innocent old soul; she was a judge of the article. Why the cobwebs were an inch thick over the bins. Come, fill up—fill up."

"Let us toast—let us toast the old woman!" sang the young robber at Blakely's elbow, who become more and more musical as the wine circulated, and the two young men broke into a disjointed chorus, which Hyatt and Smith had some difficulty in subduing.

This scene of craft and riot continued for more than two hours, when Hyatt left the table and insisted on proceeding to business. But, though Smith joined him, the other two absolutely refused to enter into any division of the spoil that night. It was too near morning they said, and another time would do as well.

Drink had made them obstinate, and neither Smith nor Hyatt felt it prudent to risk a quarrel. So it was decided that another meeting should be held ten days from that time.

All this scene the park-keeper had witnessed. His eager eye remarked every gesture; his ear had not lost a word.

Excitement had rendered the old man fearless, and he descended the dilapidated steps without heeding the dangers of the passage. A bustle overhead, and the opening of a door forced him to leave the ruin. Hyatt soon came forth, and rode away toward the village where he lodged. The old man allowed him to depart, resolved to watch while a single man hung around the tower. From time to time he heard the sound of voices, and of footsteps passing to and fro in the ruin. Then a dark figure stole by him, another, and another, each taking a different direction. This was followed by the sound of hoofs soon lost in the distance, and the old man was in solitude. (TO BE CONCLUDED.)

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THE LITTLE HAND.
BY MRS.JANE G. SWISSHELM.
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pg. 118

THE LITTLE HAND.

BY MRS. JANE G. SWISSHELM.

It was one of those mild, bright sunshines, which sometimes come to us in March, that I saw Lizzy last before she died. The wind swept on in fitful gusts, and bore the withered white-oak leaves down from the parent stem, where all the winter long they had clung lovingly, like children dutiful to shield and shelter a declining age through its long wintry loneliness. The waters sang their lullaby; the pure, bright sunbeams and the soft, warm wind moved over the cold earth like "the spirit of God upon the waters," to call up order out of chaos and beauty from the dust.

Lizzy sat up to gaze upon the scenes she loved so well, supported by her father, a stern-browed Infidel. Like a young, graceful fern upon a dark gray rock clinging instinctively for support and protection, Lizzy was all to him, his earthly all, and heaven he had none. For Abner Nealand said but truly, "he the poor Infidel has no God." He had watched her from her infancy with such a doating fondness. Sometimes he almost wished that she might learn the faith her mother loved; and which, despite himself, he felt so sure a safe-guard to that mother's purity; but then for a child of his to learn their priest-craft!

Oh! no, no, he would make her all his very *beau ideal*, a woman of philosophy. And he had tended her and stored her mind, and watched its rich developings, until his very life seemed merged into his daughter's. And one of Lizzy's little hands had hung from her infancy down powerless at her side, and never grew. This ever claimed his warmest kiss; and pointing all her lessons out, he ever held the powerless fingers of the little hand. Ah, she had been so dear to him. And now that his bud would soon burst to a blossom, consumption laid his hand upon her, and he knew that she must soon die.

Aye, die that hopeless death, that fearful sleep which knows no waking. His agony wrung bitter tear-drops from his eyes which fell upon her brow.

"Nay, do not weep, dear father," said she, "for I will be with mother soon, and with our Father, my other Father, who has been so good to me; and you will come there too. And we will meet again, oh! father, dear, I know we will."

"My child, who taught you this?"

"You, father dear, you'll not be angry if I tell you now? You know my grotto down

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beside the run. Where you went once and made a pretty seat for me; and did not let me know. And when I found it there I wondered how it came, or who had made it. Nobody went there but myself. And then I thought it might be chance; but then it was so nice, the mossy cushion for my little hand. And then I knew you did it. So I sat down and thought, and thought how chance had made this grotto, and the run; the valley, and the trees with their strong roots; and all their quivering leaves, with myriads of living things in every one. The birds to sing amongst the branches; the bright fish for the waters; the beasts to eat the grass, and grass for them to eat. And made me too, with feet to walk, my eyes to see, and ears, and oh! it seemed as if I never thought of it before. Everything looked so perfect, as though some one had meant to have it so. My little hand seemed wrong; but then I had my other one to lift it up and help me eat, and all—and *you* loved it the most. I thought so long; and then I minded how dear mother used to say, 'who made you dear?' and then bade me say 'God.' And then I felt that God *did* make me, and made everything. Oh! father, how I felt! The little flowers; the beautiful, soft moss; the graceful fern; the little darting fish, and all looked up and seemed to say, 'God made me too,' 'and me,' 'and me,' 'He is my Father.' The wind sighed through the tree tops, and then it seemed as though He spoke to me. I fell upon my knees, held up my hands, and said—'Our Father,' that was all I minded of the prayer dear mother used to teach me. Oh! father dear, I cannot tell how bright the world looked then!—how full of voices everything appeared. I wanted much to learn something about God; and so when I came home I got the key of mother's desk, and found her bible there; and next day took it down to read it in the grotto. I knelt again as when I was a little child at mother's knee, and said, 'Our Father,' and the voices came again. The water murmured on 'Our Father, Father.' The leaves, the tree tops, and the whispering wind said—'Father.' The singing birds, and all the pleasant voices of the summer woods hushed their accustomed strain, and whispered 'Father.'

"When I sat down to read the first part was, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, that the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. The spirit of God moved upon the waters and said, let there be light, and there was light.' As I looked up, the bright light from the run flashed in my eyes; and then I knew God's light was on the waters yet.

"I read then often about God and Christ; and Nanny told me all she could, but made me promise that I would not tell you of it. You will not mind it now, dear father; you will not be angry with her for it, for it made me happy. Oh! so happy! Oh! father, if you would but learn it all, you would not feel so sorry for me when I go. You *will* read of the Saviour? You know, dear father, when they came to take poor John to jail, you went his bail and paid the money for him; and they let him go. That is the way our Saviour has done for us. He paid our debt of sin which we could never pay, and bought us heaven.

"Dear father, will you think of it? Oh! if you could but keep my little hand when I am gone, and often look at it, and think if chance could make so strange a thing, and give it sense to love you so! Will you then? You will, dear father, will you not?"

"Yes, dearest, yes," and the strong man shook with uncontrollable and bitter agony. For a few moments she sank in silence, exhausted by the exertion of speaking. Then as the setting sun came full in view from her window, flooding the room in light, she feebly raised herself, and stretching her thin hand, spoke joyfully, "see, father, see, for there is God's great light—I hear the whispering in 'the tree' tops now, and I shall soon be gone."

When next I saw "dear Lizzy" she was dead. Her dark, rich hair lay in loose masses round her childish face, as it had done in life. Her own sweet smile was stamped upon her lips; but they were motionless. The laughing eye was hidden by the snowy lid, never to open more. The little hand was laid upon her breast, and closely clasped within the guardian comrade of its helpless life.

Old Nanny, the good nurse, wept, at her side, uncontrollably, while the poor father knelt beside his treasure; all that was left of it with that forsaken look of wretchedness which seems to say, "now fate has done her worst." They bore her to the grave made at her mother's side; and laid her down beneath the cold, damp sods—the sweet spring flowers no more to kiss her feet, but bloom above her head. That fair young head with all its wealth of pure, kind thoughts—its high and holy reveries. Grave this is but a trust! Thou art the steward, and yet must render thine account. Oh! it was very hard to leave our precious one then to that dreamless sleep!

A prayer went up from lips was want to pray, and the poor stricken father has now learned to say, "the Lord gave, He hath taken too, and blessed be His name."

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MARY ELLIOT.: A STORY OF A DEBUTANTE.
BY MRS.CAROLINE STARK.
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pg. 120

MARY ELLIOT.

A STORY OF A DEBUTANTE.

BY MRS. CAROLINE STARK.

BRIGHT were the lights, and gay the faces, as in a splendid mansion, applause was showered upon the performers of a charade.

There was one face upon which the cool observer could see that gaiety was only a mask—the master of the house. In the brilliant performance of the evening, his wife had been conspicuous. The last guest had retired, the owner of the anxious face thus addressed his wife—"Mary! Ambly is a defaulter—irretrievably so, and I, as one of his sureties, am irretrievably a ruined man!" His wife turned deadly pale. She thought of her young and beautiful children—and the thought nerved her to action.

The applause she had received that evening was still ringing in her ears, and she asked herself, cannot I make this one talent available! She came to her husband, and said—"Charles do not despair. If my vanity does not deceive me—if the compliments I have this evening received be not mere flattery from our gay friends, I may *yet* win a support for us all." Her husband looked as if he did not comprehend—"I mean," she proceeded calmly, "to offer my services to the manager of one of our theatres. Surely the talent, if it be a talent—that has been hitherto successfully displayed for the gratification of a selfish vanity—connot fail me in such a cause." Her husband drew her toward him, and gazed fixedly on the young, beautiful and intelligent face which looked so affectionately upon *him*. She was still pale, but a noble feeling of self-reliance gave dignity to her aspect, and sustained her under the shock of overwhelming misfortune. "Bless you, my darling wife!" was his exclamation, "and thrice blessed be your noble purpose. But no, this shall not be. I have been the friend of many during these our days of prosperity—surely, now, in adversity, some helping hand will be extended to me." Alas, he little knew the cold charity of the world, and though of an amiable character and generous disposition, his was not the nature to struggle with care. With a large hereditary fortune, devoted from youth to the pursuit of elegant literature and the arts, he had ever been a munificent patron to the man of letters, and to the artist. But he had never acquired business habits, and was as ignorant as a child of the requisites necessary to enable him to struggle for a living. On the first announcement of his ruin he had sustained his spirits, but he was yet unconscious of the stern reality of his bitter lot.

We pass over several months. He had sought employment from many whom he had considered friends during his day of prosperity. But the news of his ruin had preceded him, and he was coldly greeted by those on whom he had chiefly relied. Still he would not be turned off by cold looks—his case was too desperate. Rebellious pride revolted while he urged his claim to their assistance. They hinted his ignorance of business, and at length flatly acknowledged that they were unwilling to entrust any part of their affairs to one so wholly unfitted. *They* had earned their present prosperity by patient industry, and would not now risk it by employing one who had always been an *idler*. He turned from them with a proud and bitter feeling. But a few months since, and how different their address! Courteous and flattering language then greeted him. What had he done to be so maltreated? He left them, and bent his wearied footsteps in another direction. He enters a publishing house which had been largely indebted to him for its then present prosperity. The publisher is embarrassed in his manner, though civil. He fears the object of this visit. Elliot states it. He wishes to obtain employment as a translator, and solicits the friendly offices of the publisher. The publisher expresses a fear that it will not be in his power to do so; speaks of many pressing engagements he is already under to literary men, who have an *established reputation*. Finally he gives Charles a letter of introduction to another house, who perhaps may assist him. Elliot returns home, jaded in body and mind, and is received and cheered by his young wife. She will not believe but that in this vast city some resource will still be opened to him, and the wearied man listens to her pleasant tones until he is beguiled of his sorrows and cares.

The next day he presents the letter of introduction, but meets with a cold and positive negative. He goes to the editors of the different papers—still he is unsuccessful. At last he obtains some slight encouragement. He is engaged to write a series of tales, and, if successful, will have further employment. They have removed from their former residence to a small house in one of our narrow and crowded streets. The sale of their furniture, of some costly pictures and specimens of beautiful statuary, place the means of present support within their reach. Mary devotes herself to household cares, and though the habits of her former life had left her sadly inadequate to such avocations, yet she wears a cheerful and smiling countenance. Her beautiful children are her consolation and her joy, and as she looks upon their innocent gambols, she feels that she has yet many blessings

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to be thankful for. Elliot devotes his evening hours to writing, and time glides pleasantly and tranquilly on. The tales are completed, and with a flushed cheek and palpitating heart Elliot presents them to the publisher. They are to be submitted to the criticism of a literary gentleman, and Elliot is told to call in the course of a week. The week is at an end—he calls—still further delay. The gentleman has been so much engaged that he has not had leisure to bestow upon the tales. It were vain to tell how often and fruitlessly poor Charles called. He was at last told that the style of his work would not suit the present market—in plain words would not sell. He returned home, mortified and dejected.

How was he to announce his utter failure to his wife—they had formed so many pleasant schemes, founded upon his expected literary success. And now they were all dashed to the ground. Words were not needed to tell his tale. His sad countenance too readily expressed his disappointment, and, struggling with her own emotions, Mary strove in vain to cheer him. He has retired to rest—exhaustion of body and mind have procured the blessing of sleep. The little children, beautiful in their slumbers, are on their couch close beside him. Mary, employed in sewing, looks upon the group with a heart full of melancholy thoughts. She kneels by the side of her lovely children, and prays that want and care may ever be averted from them. She cannot sleep—she is meditating upon her former plan, and has resolved upon attempting its execution. She knows that she will meet with opposition from all her former friends—but of what avail had their friendship been in her hour of need, and why should she listen to their interference. Calmed by having at length formed her resolution, she too composes herself to rest. But a new trial is before her, and for the present she cannot execute her intentions.

Her noble, beautiful boy is taken suddenly ill, and the parents unheeding in their alarm, the necessity of husbanding their scanty funds, send for the best medical advice. The child's illness proves long and distressing, and when at length the little sufferer, relieved from the scorching fever that consumed its frame, lay exhausted on its mother's knee, that mother's heart breathed a fervent prayer to Him who watches over us in all our trials, and had spared her in this her hour of anguish. Change of air is now prescribed, and Mary and her two children hasten to the Sea Shore, leaving her husband still striving, though in vain, to mend their ruined fortunes. The child recovers, and in the fall the family are re-united. Their slender purse has been fearfully drained, and they are obliged to leave their humble home for still humbler lodgings. Winter is drawing near, and they are unprovided for the first time with the necessary comforts of that inclement season. Mary hesitates no longer, and one cold, cheerless evening, after her children were asleep, thus opened the subject to her husband.

"Charles," she said, "I must now endeavor to exert myself for our support. My education alone, although styled accomplished, is not of that thorough nature to give me the means of support, but I feel that I have powers, that if called into action, would enable me to earn our bread. Do not interrupt me," she said, as her husband was about hastily to speak, "I have laid my plans, and hear me out. Do you recollect the family of Redmonds whom I relieved, when they were in great distress, some two years since? The mother is now an actress of *mediocre* powers, it is true—but still she forms one of a regular stock company, and maintains a family of five children by her exertions. She has ever manifested gratitude to me, and would, I doubt not, afford me every facility in her power to accomplish my purpose." Her husband listened in gloomy silence. His own actual experience of the cold and cruel world, made him more than ever averse to exposing his young wife to its trials. How could he bear that the public gaze should dwell upon that lovely, speaking countenance. Yet something *must* be done, and the failure of his own attempts have goaded him to desperation. He at length exclaimed, "do what you will, Mary—your motive will surely hallow your exertions," and, hastily quitting the room, he strove by violent bodily exercise to relieve his overcharged heart. The next day Mary called at her friend, Mrs. Redmond's, and with some embarrassment made her request. She was gifted with a sweet-toned and powerful voice, and had always been a star of the first magnitude in the juvenile plays performed by herself and schoolmates; and in the charades that were then the fashionable amusement of the day, she had borne a conspicuous and brilliant part. The next morning, after preparing her toilette to the utmost advantage, she started for the theatre with Mrs. Redmond. She was introduced to the manager, and his cold, scrutinizing gaze nearly quelled the small remnant of courage in her bosom.

"Be seated, madam—I presume you have never appeared before the public?"

"I have not, sir," was the answer, her eyes fixed upon the ground, and crimsoning to her temples.

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"You will be pleased to favor me with a specimen of your style," and he handed her a volume of Shakspeare. She turned to the play of Romeo and Juliet. The character of Juliet was one that she had often studied, but her voice quivered as she commenced the beautiful soliloquy ere Juliet drinks the poison. Gradually she became interested in the scene, and entering with her whole soul into the beautiful and passionate lines she was reading, she forgot the presence of the cold manager, her own fears, her hopes, her almost desperate purpose. The manager listened in silence, and when she paused her heart beat faster than before—while she awaited his verdict. "Your tones, madam," he said, "are good, but you must be aware that much study will be required ere you can appear before the public. We are to have a rehearsal of the play that you have been reading next week. You may attend and see what you can do in the part of Juliet."

"She has great capabilities, and a decided talent," he muttered to himself, as the friends withdrew. "But it will not do to tell her so. Confound these pretty vixens! Let them but once feel their power and there is no managing them. Her beauty is of a most uncommon style, and, as my stock company is poor enough just now, will serve as an attraction to fill the house, even should her talents not prove what I now think them."

All that week poor Mary devoted herself to studying her part. The day of rehearsal arrived, and, attended by her humble friend, she again bent her steps to the theatre.

We will pass over that trial—let it suffice to say the ordeal was passed—she was accepted. The night has arrived. A *débutante* had been announced, and the house was crowded from pit to gallery. Many of her former friends, who had nearly forgotten her existence, until the announcement of her name in the papers had roused their curiosity, were there. Whispers ran around the house. "Does she still preserve her beauty? Poor thing, she must have been sadly reduced before she could resolve on this public display." These were the remarks of the good-natured part of the house. "I hope we shall be repaid for coming out this cold night. One comfort is, we need not come again if she disappoint us." These were the remarks of the more selfish. Meanwhile the youthful actress tremblingly awaits the dreaded moment of her appearance. Never had she looked more lovely than in her present delicate costume. A dress of white silk was folded gracefully over that majestic figure, and the beautiful contour of that superb head was unmarred by gem or flower. Her round and polished arms were bare, and the small, taper hand held a bouquet of white flowers, sent her by some unknown friend. Her dark eyes flashed with more than usual lustre, and her brilliant, though ever changing cheek, required not the aid of rouge to enhance its beauty. She leaned upon her husband's arm, and ever and anon this heroic woman whispered accents of encouragement that she did not feel to the despondent man.

The crashing music of the orchestra resounds through the house, and while the impatient audience await the rising of the curtain, that music is to her a relief. It postpones the dreaded moment of public display. The curtain rises, she waits, and is beginning the feel the impatience of one who has perilled all on *one* chance. She is called, she falters, one desperate resolve, one thought upon her sleeping children, she is on the stage. A round of applause greets her—she curtsies gracefully, almost supplicatingly before that brilliant audience.

The play goes on—her melodious tones tremble on the air, but becoming accustomed to the sound of her own voice, she grows bolder—she turns her from the audience and thinks of but her part—she throws her whole soul into the character—she thrills the hearts of all, and is only awakened to its being a mere scene by the peals of applause that rush upon her ear. She appears again—the audience are mute, fearful of losing one accent of that silvery voice. Never has the passionate character of Juliet been so personated to the life. The last scene closes, a moment's hush, and the house resounds with enthusiastic applause.

Exhausted, almost fainting, the beautiful creature is received in her agitated husband's arms. They leave the theatre at once, awaiting not the congratulations of those around.

"Charles, is the goal won?" is her exclamation, as the carriage drives home. Her husband presses her to his heart, and can scarce find words to express his love and admiration.

They arrive at their lodgings—her stage attire thrown aside, and, enveloped in a wrapper, she hastens to the couch of her sleeping children. She kneels by their side. "May God Almighty bless and preserve you, my darlings," is her passionate exclamation, as her tears fall upon their blooming faces. They turn in their sleep, and, half awake, murmur, "dearest mamma," and encircle her with their arms. Her over-pent heart relieves itself in tears and caresses, and she leaves them to their slumbers. A supper awaits herself and husband. They sit down, and now for the first time they realize that the hideous spectre *want*, which has haunted their

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footsteps, is to be banished. The manager has placed a draft in her husband's hands ere they left the theatre, and its amount justifies their leaving these comfortless lodgings. They retire with hearts of thankfulness that they have been able to sustain this fearful trial. The next day they take a small but comfortable house near one of the parks, where the children can rejoice in the free air. A middle aged woman, their former nurse, is reinstated in her joyful charge over these, her darlings. The manager is smiling and courteous, and a large salary is agreed upon. Mary is to appear three times in the week. Some of her former friends call upon her. She receives them coldly, though civilly, and listens to their compliments with an indifferent air. She cannot forget their desertion of her in her hour of need. She finds her greatest happiness with her children. Her noble boy is placed at one of the best schools, and her cherub girl rejoices with great glee over the treasure of toys mamma has bestowed. Her husband looks upon her with pride and joy, and she feels that the dark cloud has passed away, and the sun of prosperity is rising upon them.

The winter has passed, and on the approach of spring, Mary and her husband go to Philadelphia. The like success attends her there. Many of the first families call upon her, and her graceful, winning manners serve to rivet her claim to their admiration and respect. They proceed to the South. She is greeted by the warm-hearted inhabitants with all that chivalric feeling ever manifested by them, where merit and talent are combined, and she is cheered by the heartfelt sympathy of those around her. They leave with regret these kind friends, and return to the North. The summer months she devotes to her children, and to recruiting her system from the excessive labor she has undergone. The instantaneous success that has crowned her labors, and the consequent happiness that she has shed around her domestic circle, have hitherto rendered her unconscious of the inroad that late hours and unceasing mental effort have made upon her constitution. But when the heat of the summer months forced her to relax in her labors, she consoles herself with the thought that a few weeks of rest will restore her wonted health. They go to a beautiful village on the Sea Shore—her children rejoice with the *strong joy* of childhood in the healthful and invigorating breeze, and their beautiful mother mingles with their sports, and shares their happiness. They return. An engagement is formed with the theatre. The same deafening applause crowns her efforts, but alas, she feels the canker worm of ill heath gnawing at her bosom. She carefully conceals this from all. Even her husband's anxious love divines not the fatal secret. She is gay and animated in her domestic circle, and devotes herself as ever to its wants and cares. The wakeful hours and feverish throbbings of the pulse are known to her alone. She still hopes to avert the evil hour, but moments of anguish will force themselves upon her, and she prays in secret that she may be yet spared to her family. Christmas holydays approach, and the family group are gathered around their cheerful fireside. Mary and her children have not forgotten the wants of the poor in this inclement season. Many a poor family bless them for the cheering warmth that invigorates their benumbed limbs.

It is Christmas day. The family return from church. A plenteous dinner crowns the board, and several poor actors who have no cheerful home, are invited by this amiable family to partake their Christmas cheer. The evening closes with blind man's buff, and other noisy games, and the whole family join in the merry frolics. The winter proved more than usually severe, and, in spite of all her precautions, Mary suffered much from its severity. Still her sufferings are concealed from all eyes—she will not poison the happiness of those dependant upon her by speaking of her sufferings. She devotes herself more than ever to her arduous profession. Her children repay her for every sacrifice. They have all the advantages of care and education that the wealthiest can enjoy, and what recks the devoted mother if her heart's blood must prove their nourishment.

But a greater trial awaits her. The scarlet fever is raging through the city, and of that fatal kind that sweeps off whole families in its march. The mother trembles for her offspring, and for a time they are spared. One evening upon returning from the theatre, and visiting as was her wont the bedside of the little slumberers, she was alarmed by the uneasy tossings of her boy. The nurse attributed his feverishness to a slight cold, but the mother's feelings were at once alarmed. She removes the child to her couch, and watches over him until toward morning, when his fever subsiding he fell into a quiet sleep. Overcome by exhaustion she too slumbered. She was awakened by the sudden start of the little sleeper, and rousing herself she perceived that the child's fever was rapidly increasing. She thought she perceived beneath the surface of the skin the dreaded indications of scarlet fever. Medical advice was at once summoned. The physician confirms her fears, and advises the instant removal of the little girl. The dread of infection is so great that it is found

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impossible to effect this, and an upper room is devoted to her nursery. Night draws near, and the mother rejoices that her theatrical services are not required that evening. The child grows worse, he does not recognize any one around him. The mother will not let any one interfere with her care of him. At midnight she hears a tap at the door. A message from the nurse of her little girl desiring to see her—she changes her dress and hastens to the child. Gold help the poor mother! The children are in the same room, and as evening approaches the mother feels that she *must* leave them. For the first time she feels the galling of the chain.

Those who depend upon the public for maintenance must answer its demands. The hour draws near, and in anguish of heart she leaves her children to the care of her husband and their nurse. Ah, who among that enraptured audience, as they hung entranced upon her accents, could guess at the agony concealed in that bosom. The play is over and she hastens home. She enters the nursery. The dejected looks of the watchers give her no hope. The little girl is rapidly growing worse, and the parents gaze at one another in mute despair. Another fearful day is passed. Again the mother is obliged to tear herself from her darlings. She goes and is deafened by the applause that rewards her efforts. With aching brow and despair at her heart she flies home. Another night of anguish and sorrow. Toward morning the sufferings of the little ones seem relieved, and gaspingly the mother awaits the physician's call. Alas, the fatal decree has gone forth. The appearance of mortification in the canker spots in the throat, announce that hope is vain. Relieved from their sufferings, the beautiful little ones lay, but their fast failing breath and alabaster countenances announce the near approach of death. The parents, stunned with the heaviness of their sorrow, gaze speechless upon them. The hours creep by, and as the day fades these glorious little beings wing their way to their heavenly home. Tearless, and apparently cold as marble, the mother composes their limbs, she lays them side by side. No other hand than her own is suffered to array them for the last time on earth. All over she strews them with flowers, and seats herself to watch. Blessed and beautiful children. You have passed away in the hey-day of your innocent happiness—sin has not marred nor sorrow visited you, nor have you tasted of the bitterness of this world.

The last rites are over, and the wretched couple return to their solitary mansion. The short respite of a week is allowed to the mother before she is again to appear before the public. They take no note of time, and the first thing that arouses Mary from her hopeless despondancy, is a remark that she overhears from her old nurse. "Poor Mr. Elliot, he cannot last long." She turns to her husband, and for the first time perceives the ravages that care and disease have made upon him. She rouses herself to become once more the devoted nurse.

The week expires, she must attend the manager's summons, or be held responsible for a large amount. The play is Fazio—mechanically she prepares her toilette—she leaves for the theatre. The play commences, and the anguish of her soul breaks its icy bonds, and brings down peals of applause upon her consummate acting. The play proceeds—the audience suspend their breath at witnessing the acting of the catalepsy that follows the denunciation of Fazio, then they thunder their applause—it falls upon a cold, unheeding ear. The catalepsy is not feigned—a blood-vessel has broken, and the last act in the domestic tragedy of this noble woman's life is at an end.

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TRYING THE FORTUNE: AND SPECTRAL ILLUSIONS.
BY CAROLINE ORNE.
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pg. 125

TRYING THE FORTUNE

AND SPECTRAL ILLUSIONS.

BY CAROLINE ORNE.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." HAMLET.

THOUGH every person, at certain seasons, experiences a craving for excitement, it must necessarily be subject to various modifications in different individuals, owing to the dissimilarity of temperament, as well as to the influence of the particular class of objects by which they are surrounded.

The inhabitants of thinly settled countries are likely to feel this want more sensibly than those of populous towns, and when, as was the case with our Pilgrim Fathers and their more immediate descendants, it does not find relief in a fervid, religious faith, and in that negative kind of penance—an austere and self-denying life—it is apt to turn to supernatural wonders, and endeavor to test their capability of so far linking themselves with the material world as to address themselves to the sight or hearing. Hence, according to the accounts of those who were young half a century since, nothing was more common, at that time, among the youthful portion of a thinly inhabited country, than what was called "Trying the Fortune." For this purpose methods almost innumerable were resorted to. While the more timid lass placed a four-leaved clover in the shoe worn on her right foot, with the expectation that the first man she afterward met would be the one she was to marry; one less fearful, before retiring to rest, would, while repeating some rude rhymes in the form of an invocation, strew ashes by the side of her bed, in which she wrote her name, expecting in the morning, unless doomed to an early death or a "life of single blessedness," to find that of her future husband written over it.

Those still bolder and more daring ventured to perform certain incantations, which, it was supposed, would at the "witching hour of night" summon to the presence of the person by whom they were wrought, the phantom of the one whom he or she was destined to wed.

In these days of magazines and newspapers, conveyed by the power of steam with almost winged speed to every section of the country, we hear little about trying the fortune. The imagination finding a wider range is less impatient, less likely to make self the central point of attraction, and less likely to become so heated as to exalt itself into a wild and gloomy enthusiasm; a state of mind which thrusts reason too far into the back-ground to be either safe or desirable.

Many years ago there was a small country place in New England, which would not be recognized now by the description which applied to it then—the principal road, at that time being quite narrow, uneven and winding, and deeply fringed on either side by scraggy bushes, and the weather-beaten farm-houses, their shingled roofs, half covered with moss, rising at such distant intervals that the inmates could scarcely discern the smoke of their nearest neighbor's chimney.

One of these houses was the dwelling of a man who used often to visit a family that lived six or seven miles distant. His avowed motive was to enjoy the religious conversation of the heads of the family, though the real attraction without doubt was their niece, a handsome, dark-eyed damsel of seventeen. He was a widower, and being more than twenty years her senior, without any personal advantages to recommend him, she regarded him with coldness bordering on aversion. Neither did her uncle and aunt encourage his addresses, though he was a person of correct habits, and in possession of what was considered a handsome property; for they imagined there were times when he manifested incipient signs of insanity. Their conjectures were not without cause, as within a few years afterward he exhibited unequivocal marks of mental abberation, which ultimately settled down into confirmed lunacy.

His temperament partook largely of the melancholic, and like all such persons he was inclined to enthusiasm, and his nerves were easily excited. While obedient to the admonition of the poet, he should have

"Sought the cheerful haunts
Of men, and mingled with the busy crowd;"

he lived almost entirely excluded from society, except that twice or thrice a year he attended a husking or a quilting.

He spent much of his time in the dim solitudes of the forest, and often when he paused in his labor, the echoes of his own axe seemed to him the mysterious voices of spirits. At such times, according to his own confession many years afterward, while on a visit to the family alluded to, he felt an irrepressible longing to look into the volume of fate, in order to ascertain if he were destined to wear out his life a lonely bachelor, or to wed some cheerful, light-hearted maiden whose presence would shed a gleam of sunshine through his then dreary habitation.

He was at length, though not without many misgivings as to its entire freedom from guilt, constrained to listen to what appeared to him "this supernatural soliciting." He accordingly,

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after retiring to his chamber one night, performed a certain incantation, which, he had been told, would summon the phantom of his future wife to his bed-side, if wife he was destined to have. What the incantation was, he did not reveal, though he intimated with a kind of shuddering horror, that the sacred volume was made subservient to his purpose. After having been in bed several hours, there was, to use his own words, a noise like an earthquake, and the house shook. Immediately the room became light as day, and the figure of a female appeared to enter a window, and, with a gliding motion, to approach within a few paces of the bedside, where it became stationary. Though the sight "made his heart knock at his ribs," he was able to distinguish her features, and the materials and fashion of her dress. She was an entire stranger to him, and the roll or cushion over which her hair was combed according to the fashion of the times, was considerably higher than the young girls of his acquaintance ventured to wear. Her gown was a rich chintz, the prevailing color of which was purple, and on her neck she wore a kerchief of fine white lawn. For a minute or more she stood perfectly motionless, intently regarding him; she then approached the bed more nearly, and began to bend slowly over him.

Till this moment it had appeared impossible for him to move or speak, but the extremity of fear which now possessed him broke the icy spell by which he was bound, and suddenly rising so far as to support himself on his elbow, he repeated the solemn adjuration, which, according to tradition, he supposed proper for the occasion. She immediately, still keeping her eyes fixed upon him, began slowly to recede in the direction of the window, which, having reached, she appeared to melt into air, and the room became dark as before she entered.

In about a week afterward, at a house a number of miles distant, there was a quilting, to which he and some other young men were invited in the evening. On entering the room where the young women were seated round the quilt, his attention was arrested by one of them, whose appearance in every respect answered to that of the phantom that had visited him in his chamber. She was dressed in the same purple chintz gown and lawn kerchief, and her hair was combed over a roll nearly an inch higher than those worn by her companions.

The acquaintance which commenced on that evening resulted in marriage, and he subsequently ascertained that the night he imagined he saw her at his bed-side she was very ill, having for some time been insensible.

Whether their married life proved happy or otherwise, the person I heard relate the foregoing particulars did not say, and probably did not know. It was certainly very brief, his wife having been dead many years at the time he became enamored of the handsome, dark-eyed maiden he wished to make her successor.

Persons having the credulity to follow his example as respects "trying the fortune," could not readily be made to believe that the imagination might be so vivid as to deceive the eye, or that there ever was such a thing as an illusion of vision, occasioned by an affection of the retina; yet they might possibly be deterred from so doing by the knowledge that the spectral appearance of his wife, as she glided into his room at midnight, seemed ever to haunt his memory, rather than such as lovely and full of health, she crossed his threshold as his bride. Many imagined that it awakened into life the latent germ of insanity, which was heightened by the coldness of the second object of his choice.

A lady once related to me two instances of spectral illusion, which had occurred to herself. The first took place when she was only eleven or twelve years old.

She had, as usual, during the long days of summer, retired to bed with the first faint shades of twilight. A favorite brother, three years old, was lying by her side, and was already wrapt in rosy sleep, when she beheld close to that side of the bed where he lay a small coffin, which appeared suspended in the air a few feet from the floor. Very soon it began to move slowly toward a window, through which it appeared to pass in the direction of a grave-yard at no great distance.

From that moment she felt sure that her brother would die within a year, a kind of weird period, which, it was thought, a person never passed whose death had been revealed by what was called a "forerunner."

The child *did* die within a few weeks of a prevailing epidemic, and she, then, was confirmed in the belief that what she had seen was a warning of his death.

Those who might be inclined to assign a natural cause for what she took to be a supernatural appearance, would probably imagine that owing to her anxiety respecting the child on account of the prevalence of a malignant disease, she had merely been visited by one of those lively dreams, which Sir Walter Scott says may take place when the person is "so far conscious as to know that he is lying in his own bed, and surrounded by his own furniture."

The other instance occurred eight or ten years afterward.

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She had been invited to spend a few days in a family that lived about twelve miles from her father's residence. It was in the month of September, and on the day which had been appointed for her to go, although there were indications of rain, she started on horseback in season to perform the journey before dark. When she had arrived within two or three miles of the place where she was going, a thick, heavy mist commenced falling. Another family with whom she was intimately acquainted, one of the children, a girl nine years old, being her particular favorite, lived within a short distance of the one she was going to visit. A large, fine orchard contiguous to their house, extended to the main road, from which it was separated by a stone wall. As she was passing this orchard she saw the little girl who was her favorite, walking along parallel to the wall at about the distance of half a rod. The child looked at her and smiled, and she returned the smile, but for some reason inexplicable to herself she did not speak to her. Although she did not think particularly of it at the moment of seeing her, it immediately afterward occurred to her as very singular, the child's health being delicate, that her parents should suffer her to be walking in the orchard during such a heavy mist without any extra clothing, and through the grass already perfectly saturated. The more she reflected upon it, the more singular it appeared to her; so much so, that soon after her arrival at the place of her destination, she mentioned the circumstance to the family.

"You certainly did not see her," said one of them, "for she has been very sick for nearly a week, and is not expected to live."

The lady, however, was confident that she could not have been mistaken, for there was no other child living within many miles that in the least resembled her.

A few minutes afterward, a boy who had been sent to inquire respecting her, returned with the information that she had been dead about half an hour—the same length of time which had elapsed, as nearly as could be ascertained, since the lady had seen her walking in the orchard.

Another lady related to me the following instance of a spectral apparition.

A young man who was going a short sea-voyage for his health, was in the habit of frequently spending a day or two in the family of which she was a member. They resided about twelve or fifteen miles from Boston, whence he was going to sail, and the last time he took leave of them, it was partly with the expectation of re-visiting them, as he did not expect that the vessel would be ready for sea before eight or ten days.

About a week after his departure, as she was one afternoon sitting by a chamber window, no other person being in the house—she saw him enter the yard and approach the front door. She descended in haste, expecting to meet him in the entry, as he was too familiarly acquainted to perform the ceremony of knocking. Not meeting him as she had anticipated she opened the door, but neither he nor any other person was on the outside. She then stepped out so as to command a view of the street. No one was in sight, and with a feeling of disappointment she re-entered the house. She mentioned the circumstance to the other members of the family when they returned, but little was thought of it, as they as well as she concluded that some person whose general appearance was similar to his, had mistaken the house for some other, and, discovering his error, had withdrawn before she opened the door.

Soon afterward news came that the vessel had sailed that very day, the preparations for the voyage having been completed sooner than had been expected.

In a few months afterward, his friends received a letter from the captain of the vessel, which contained the melancholy intelligence that their young relative fell overboard the day he sailed, soon after they had left the harbor, and, that the wind being high at the time, it was found impossible to rescue him.

One more instance of what has been considered a spectral appearance, would, I have sometimes been inclined to think if it admitted of investigation, prove similar to the story of the delirious patient who rose from his bed, and by means of a pass-key entered the summer-house where were assembled the club of which he was a member, and over which he was that evening to have presided.

A lady who was a resident of a city in New England, and had in early youth received a promise of marriage from a man of wealth, who afterward deserted her and married another, was one evening sitting alone, no other person being in that part of the house.

The evening was dark and stormy, causing the streets to be comparatively deserted, so that there was little to interrupt the silence except the moaning of the wind, and the pattering of the rain against the windows. Suddenly she heard two or three smart raps against the outer door, as if with a horseman's whip. It was not without some slight feeling of alarm that she went to the door and opened it. She was greatly surprised to see the man standing on the door-step who had, a dozen years before, so basely deceived her, and with whom, since his marriage, she had never once spoken.

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He was enveloped in a plaid-cloak, which he was in the habit of wearing—a garment which at that time was just coming into fashion.

"I have deeply injured you," said he, calling her by name, "and wish, as far as I am able, to make reparation. I must have some conversation with you in private."

As he spoke, he made a movement as if he intended to enter the house. She was much frightened, for his eyes looked wild and staring, and he spoke hurriedly, and as if out of breath. She refused his request, for the thought struck her, owing to his wild look and incoherent manner, that he might mean to take her life. Instead of urging the wish he had expressed for an interview, with the pertinacity which might have been expected from the earnestness with which he first addressed her, he turned abruptly away, while much relieved she shut the door and locked it.

The next day she heard he was dead, his decease having taken place the previous evening, after three or four days' illness of a fever, though owing to the course she had prescribed to herself of avoiding, as far as possible, all knowledge of his proceedings, she was not aware that he was not in the enjoyment of his usual health at the time she saw him at the door.

All the foregoing instances of spectral illusion were related by persons of unquestionable veracity; and if to them they appeared as realities, it may be remarked as an apology for their credulity, that even philosophers had not then become so familiar with the wonders of science as at the present day.

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THE LEGACY.
BY ELLEN ASHTON.
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THE LEGACY.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

"My dear, I have news for you," said Henry Eldridge, as he entered the parlor, on his return from the store.

"What is it? I see it is something remarkable," said his wife.

"Old Mrs. Thompson, your great aunt, has died and left you two thousand dollars."

"Poor lady!" was the first exclamation of Mrs. Eldridge, and then there was a pause. "But she had lived to be eighty-two, and in the natural course of events could expect nothing else," sententiously resumed the speaker. "Well, I'm sure, it was very handsome of her to remember me. Two thousand dollars—what a nice sum? What in the world shall we do with so much money?"

Mrs. Eldridge was a good-hearted, well-meaning woman, the wife of a store-keeper in moderate circumstances, and had hitherto been contented with her comparatively humble lot. But she was fond of display, and this legacy instantly suggested to her a score of ways of gratifying it. Her husband, who loved her dearly, generously placed the legacy at her disposal, although it would have been particularly desirable for him to have had two thousand dollars more added to his capital; but as he had never been able to afford his wife any money hitherto, and as he disliked to have her relatives say he appropriated the legacy to himself, he waived all claim to it. Mrs. Eldridge did not press it on him, for she knew little of his business; and, moreover, she was anxious, for once, to have two thousand dollars of her own to spend. She embarked, at once, in the most magnificent projects for spending her little fortune, imagining, like all persons unaccustomed to money, that it would be inexhaustible.

"I will have new carpets over all the house," she said, "and entirely new furniture for the parlor: then baby shall have an elegant crib, I saw one, the other day, with a pretty blue silk canopy, the very thing: and little Ellen shall have a velvet hat with a plume, this winter—velvet hats are so becoming—and you, my dear husband, shall have an elegant over-coat, the very latest fashion, for your old cloak is positively shabby, besides a splendid Christmas present, which, you know, I must keep secret—and we will all take a trip to Saratoga this summer, for we can afford it for once—and I will buy myself one of those superb long shawls I have always desired to own—and we will have a complete set of silver spoons, and a new table service

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of real old stone china, and new porcelain cups and saucers, with plates, I saw the most beautiful things of the kind lately—and I will buy an elegant large mirror for the parlor, I can get one for a hundred dollars—and we will hire a carriage every few days and take a ride into the country, I know it will do us all good—and, this winter, what a party I will give, I am ashamed of ourselves for not giving a party, but I knew you could not afford it, and so I said nothing about it—and you shall have one of those beautiful arm-chairs, like Mr. Simpson has got, which I have often heard you admire—and——"

"But, my dear," interrupted her husband, "I am afraid, if you do all these things, you will have little of your two thousand dollars left. The sum, though it seems large, will not buy everything, and you must put some limit to your desire for luxuries, else what might be really useful will have to be abandoned."

"Oh! but you jest, Mr. Eldridge. Sure, two thousand dollars will buy these things, and more. Besides they are not luxuries, they are comforts we really want. Does not baby require a crib—and you a chair and over-coat—and Ellen a hat and feather—and the parlors new furnishing—and I a shawl—and all of us a breath of country air now and then? Indeed I shall not spend a cent for anything but what is necessary."

"Well, my dear," replied her easy, good-natured husband, "I am sure I shall say nothing if you do. The money is yours, and I suspect the pleasure you will derive from it, will be more in the spending it, than in the enjoyment of what it will purchase. However, I think it quite possible you might derive a larger share of amusement from it in another way."

"Amusement! Why, my dear, what do you mean? Only amusement!"

"Well, then," said her husband, with a smile, "suppose, instead of spending your two thousand dollars, you were to invest it—buy a small house for instance, or purchase some good bank stock. The annual income of this legacy would be from one hundred to one hundred and twenty dollars, which sum you would, every year, enjoy the pleasure of spending. Would not that be better than squandering the whole at once?"

"Squandering! Amusement and squandering. Really, Mr. Eldridge, what can you mean? You don't want me to have this money."

"Indeed, my dear, you mistake me. I do not even wish to control you. I was only suggesting whether it would not be more pleasant to have a hundred dollars every year to spend as you pleased, rather than two thousand dollars once in your life."

"No indeed," replied the wife. "If I invested the money, what would a hundred dollars do? It would not new furnish the house, nor buy baby a crib, nor do half the other things I intend this legacy shall do."

"But it would enable you to do some of them this year; others might follow the next; and still others afterward."

"A hundred dollars would not more than buy my parlor carpets, much less the rest of the furniture."

"Very true, my dear."

"Much less baby's crib, and your chair, and the party."

"Very true."

"Then I shall spend my two thousand."

"To which, I repeat, I shall not object. Only, my dear, I hope you will hereafter be as well satisfied with this arrangement as you are now."

"Oh! never fear," replied his wife.

Accordingly the two thousand dollars were paid to Mrs. Eldridge in person, who insisted on receiving it in solid gold. For several days she kept her little fortune untouched, solacing herself with looking at it every few hours; but at last the desire of possessing her new furniture got the better of her love of contemplating the bright eagles of her hoard, and she launched, at once, into the wide sea of bargaining. The first thing she did, be it said to her credit, was to buy baby the new crib: the next to furnish her husband his arm-chair: then a sufficient sum was set aside to purchase her little daughter's hat and plume; after this came the shawl, the parlor furniture, the carpets and the silver. By the time she had procured these, and a few other things which she considered the most indispensable, the two thousand dollars were consumed, without leaving the expected surplus to pay for the trip to Saratoga, the occasional country excursions, or any other of the comparative luxuries with which she had resolved to indulge herself and husband.

Mrs. Eldridge's house looked very elegant, we acknowledge, when the new furniture had come home. The pearl colored blinds, the pier-glass in its gilded frame, the handsome mahogany chairs, the new fashioned sofa, and the elegant carpets gave her parlor quite a beautiful appearance. But who was to admire all this? The Eldridges kept little company, for their income would not afford it, and except her own connexions, who were rather envious of this display, there were none to extol her acquisitions. If it had been possible to give a party, and thus exhibit the new furniture to her acquaintance, Mrs. Eldridge would have been delighted; and, perhaps, she derived more unhappiness from the consideration that she could not now afford a party, than she had

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experienced pleasure in the spending her legacy. Now and then an acquaintance, one a week at most, dropped in, and then Mrs. Eldridge gratified her vanity by their exclamations of admiration and surprise. But, in a few months, all her fine furniture had lost the charm of novelty, both for her and for her friends: and, to add to her disappointment, it grew sensibly older and more faded, without a hope of her ever being able to supplant it.

"Well, my dear," said Mr. Eldridge, about a year after their first conversation on the subject of the legacy, "what are you thinking of to-night, that you look so serious?"

His wife colored and was silent. For some minutes she continued to ply her needle faster, then she stopped, flung down her work, and bursting into tears, threw herself on her husband's neck.

He looked surprised at this sudden emotion, and endeavored to soothe her.

"Are you not well, my dear?" he said.

Mrs. Eldridge at length ceased sobbing, and found words to speak.

"I was thinking," she said, "how foolish I was, not to take your advice when you wanted me to invest my legacy. My two thousand dollars is all gone, whereas if I had adopted your counsel I would have had a nice income out of it to spend every year. In the end, we are no better for the legacy, though we might have been if I had followed your suggestion."

"Well, never mind, my dear. We cannot help your mistake, which, after all was a natural one; but it will teach us, I hope, the useful lesson not to squander on superfluities what may, at some period, be wanted for the necessaries of life."

The lesson was not lost on Mrs. Eldridge. In giving way to the gratification of a momentary vanity, she had sacrificed the power of obtaining many little comforts, which every year she felt she needed more. But the past taught her wisdom, and as her husband's prospects improved, she was the first to counsel the substantial benefits of a proper economy.

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TWILIGHT MUSINGS.
BY D. ELLEN GOODMAN.
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TWILIGHT MUSINGS.

BY D. ELLEN GOODMAN.

It is the hour of twilight—calm, soothing, holy. The whole earth seems hushed to a pleasant slumber, and a sad, sweet smile lies upon nature's beautiful face. The gold and crimson clouds that but a moment ago spread across the western sky like a brilliant curtain, have grown paler, softer, and now their delicate hues mingle with fleecy white and deep azure, and they float over the dome of heaven like birds of exquisite plumage, or seraph forms smiling upon the quiet earth. Not a sigh stirs the heavy foliage of the forest trees, not a breath ripples this fairy lake that sleeps so peacefully at my feet; the tall, graceful, drooping branches of the willow sweeping its tranquil bosom, and its waters stained with the deep blue of the skies. Dear, lovely lake! How oft have I reclined thus upon thy flowery margin, and dipped my brow into thy cool waves; how often have I wandered beneath the shadows that encircle thee, and in yonder fairy barque glided over thy glittering surface? The light is fading in the west—the many tints of brightness have left the waving cloudlets, and now they nestle together like pure, white-winged doves upon the broad, blue heaven, so "deeply, beautifully blue;" and then like a gem upon evening's taintless brow, gleams forth in solitary glory her brightest, earliest star! Oh! Isle of Beauty! how many a deep and passionate thought goes out to thee, as thy first golden beams fall thus soothingly upon the heart!

I raise my eyes to the far-distant throne where thou sittest in glory and meek beauty, and a whisper seems borne from thine innermost shrine. A soft, melodious voice like that of an angel, is wafted on the evening air, telling of the departed fair ones who made earth more lovely by their smiles, and of fadeless, deathless flowers that bloom away in thy sinless realm. Beautiful star! Can 'st tell me of one who loved thee once as I worship thee now, whose truthful eyes have often gazed upon thee, and whose soul yearned toward thee in unutterable delight? She was a creature of almost unearthly loveliness; beautiful beyond earth's rarest beauty-gifted, but meek and gentle as a child. Her eyes—I have often gazed into them and tried to fathom their earnest depths, but there was an expression so lofty, so heavenly about them, that I would turn away almost awed by their strange power. The silken hair that wound in its deep, black folds about her forehead of snow would stream out in its rich luxuriance upon the night air; and her red lips, half open, as she looked upward to the gem

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of night, would whisper tremblingly the beautiful thoughts that filled her pure and yearning soul! Alice—my own sweet friend—it seems but yester-night I saw thee thus. A pure white rose-bud slept amid thy raven curls, thy large, fond eyes turned mournfully from my face up to yonder star, and with thy small, white finger pointing heavenward, thou wert even *then* like an angel in beauty and purity. But Alice—I have seen thee since, even more seraph-like in thy spiritual loveliness than on that quiet eve. Yes—I've seen thee on thy bier—within thy coffin—and the snowy satin that softly touched thy marble cheek was not purer or whiter than thy own young face. Like shadows fell those long and glossy curls about thy neck and over thy shroud, and the drooping lashes of black that fringed thy closed lids, lay caressingly upon either cheek. But oh! my Alice—the smile, all unearthly in its beauty and expression, was what gave thy cold, meek face its most touching charm. A smile so full of peace and joy, *so* beautiful and holy, that I could not weep as I placed the little dimpled hands upon thy throbless bosom, and bent my lips to thy chill forehead. And now, Alice, alone I sit, and look upward to *our* star, and wonder if it is thy smile that beams thus kindly down upon me, if thou in all thy radiant loveliness, ay! in a beauty surpassing all thy earthly charms, art wandering with thy sister angels amid the brightness of yon glorious sphere. I will believe thou art there; and nightly, as I bend above this little lake, and see its image far, far down in the slumbering waters, I will dream of thee, sweet Alice, and listen to thy tones of softest melody.

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THE ILLUMINATION.: AN INCIDENT OF THE MEXICAN WAR.
BY MISS C. F. ASHMEAD.
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THE ILLUMINATION.

AN INCIDENT OF THE MEXICAN WAR.

BY MISS C. F. ASHMEAD.

To that period when repeated victories over the Mexicans in three or four successive engagements had inspired the land to offer some public demonstration of national gratification, this tale would draw the attention of the reader.

It is not long since brilliant illuminations throughout many a city, town and village, bespoke the people's pride and joy in the continued triumphs of American arms. But in every place where these rejoicings were held, there must have been some whose hearts neither kindled nor reflected back one spark of the brilliancy that surrounded them—individuals whose kindred blood had been, or was soon to be, shed or else imperilled, to aid in the purchase of victory. To such, indeed, these fires could have been little short of bitter mockery of griefs too wild for any, except those who have known the danger or death of the loved and absent, to appreciate.

On a certain day, in a city of no great dimensions or no great note, preparations for one of these illuminations was in progress. Advertisements of candles for sale, had, for a week previous, been placarded on every wall and post, and thrown in at every door. Grocers, confectioners and milliners, had, for the time being, changed the tenor of their respective vocations, and dealt chiefly in the vending of lots of little tin candlesticks to suit the approaching occasion. Transparencies of Gen. Taylor, in every imaginable military situation and attitude, had been prepared. Materials for fire-works of all possible forms had been procured. And now the long anticipated day had come, and everything must be made ready against the evening. In the interior of every house men, women and children were as busily at work with candles as if the tenure of existence had suddenly, in some way, become interwoven with the cutting, and handling, and placing of them in windows:—while the few passengers along the streets seemed to be out for the single purpose of noting their neighbors' preparations, in order that they might take measures on their return home, not to fall short of the full complement of light about to be exhibited by others. And thus the day wore away, and the evening came.

The whole town becoming, as it were, bathed in brilliancy, it was not until then that an observer would have discovered, that, although the public demonstration was general, yet it was not entirely universal. Here and there a dwelling with shutters closed, and from which no single stream of light emerged, offered itself as a mark for gossip and observation.

In one of these dwellings, situated in a retired street, within a parlor whose arrangements were rather comfortable than elegant, sat a lonely lady. A small shaded lamp was on the table by her side, and near it lay the last newspaper, whose contents she had probably recently been examining, though she now seemed to be plunged in deep and sad reflection.

She suddenly roused herself, wiped away a tear that trembled in her soft, blue eye, and was about to engage herself with her work, when a little boy burst into the room, exclaiming—

"Mama, mama, come and see the fire-works—quick, mama, or the prettiest will all be over."

The lady called him to her side, and said a few words to him in a gentle voice.

"Dear mama," replied the child, "I forgot that I was saying anything to make you sorry: but I happened to see them from the back window up stairs, and not remembering my papa at that moment, I thought that you would like to see them, too, dear."

"It is selfish in me," said the lady, after a moment or two, "to wish to check your childish pleasure at the sight of these beautiful works of art. Go up stairs again to the window, my love, and look at the fire-works. Go," she added, parting his golden curls, and kissing his fair forehead as he lingered affectionately near her, and hesitated to leave her.

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On this second repetition of the command, the boy, with the natural feelings of his years, after repaying her kiss, returned up stairs. And the lady had taken up her knitting, when the door-bell rang, and a visitor entered. It was Mr. Thompson, the kind friend in whose charge her husband had left her, when, a month before, he had been ordered to join his regiment in Mexico.

"My dear madam," began he, "I have come to take you to my house to spend the evening. This place is lonely and dull, and reminds you of him who is gone. Moreover, you must first walk around the town with me, and look at these illuminations. It is perfectly natural that you should not—being one who has a husband about to engage in the war—have lit up your own dwelling: but it is not natural—being an officer's wife—that you should feel no pride in these great victories of our national arms. Come, my dear madam, get your bonnet and shawl."

"Excuse me, my friend," said the lady, "but I——"

"I will have no buts," replied Mr. Thompson, kindly, though positively. "Your good husband left you subject to my commands, and they this evening impose upon you this trial of your obedience."

The lady seemed to feel too little energy to dispute the point further; and saying she would first have her little son put to bed, left the room for that purpose, and shortly after returned prepared for her walk.

To say how faithfully good Mr. Thompson conducted his gentle charge through the streets, and pointed out to her all the principal illuminations—those that were "best worth looking at," as he said—would be impossible. To tell how ingeniously he explained the designs contained on the different transparencies—some of which, truth to say, were riddles of the deepest order—would be more impossible still. And to set forth how dexterously he succeeded in half beguiling the sad lady's melancholy thoughts, would be the most impossible of all. His was one of those true hearts, full of the milk of human kindness, not often met with in this selfish world: and overflowing with interest for the gentle-being left under his protection by the friend who had gone to share the dangers and uncertainties of war, that heart had conceived that the sound of these rejoicings meeting her ear in the solitude of her own home, and bearing with it suggestions of the cause that originated them, would have a much more painful effect upon her feelings, than if, in the admiration of the pageant, she suffered herself to forget the occasion that called it forth. In this belief he had visited her, and, as we have seen, had succeeded in inducing her to join him, an unwilling spectator of the unwonted scene. In spite of herself she was gradually beguiled into forgetfulness, in noticing the various forms in which the taste of the different illuminators had displayed itself, the beauties of some and the absurdities of others of the transparencies, and the crowd which thronged the streets: so that by the time she reached Mr. Thompson's, she had recovered some small portion of the cheerfulness and animation that characterized her countenance before the sound of war had called her husband from their happy home.

And it was not at Mr. Thompson's house, or surrounded by those she met there, that that lady was to be permitted to relapse into the depth of her melancholy mood. For there was Mrs. Thompson, the fattest and kindest of good women, possessed of what rarely go together in this world, a tongue of silver and a heart of sincerity: and there was Miss Bella, her daughter, with what are oftener united, a voice of music and a soul of tenderness: and there was Master Charles, her son, owner of a ready jest and a merry laugh: and there was young Mr. Brownson, Miss Bella's lover, proprietor of a fund of anecdote, with the happiest manner of introducing the same to suit the tastes of his auditors. They had all been round likewise to look at the illuminations, and had returned full of talk about them, and about many other things besides. And what with listening to them chat around her, and joining in occasionally herself; and looking at them snuff the candles, (for Mr. Thompson's family had illuminated) and sometimes snuffing one herself: and listening for the report from Master Charles every twenty minutes on his return from his snuffing expedition up stairs, as to whether or not anything had taken fire: and the excitement once of an alarm at one of the candles over the front door having slightly burned the wood-work—the evening passed rapidly, and ten o'clock arrived: and the bereaved lady was constrained to admit that she had spent a pleasanter evening than she could have believed possible had any one predicted it for her beforehand.

But while that sad lady was being beguiled thus, a rather remarkable train of circumstances was occurring in the house she had left so short a time before.

The town clock had just struck half past eight, when a gentleman who had walked at a rapid rate up the street—so rapid that he had scarcely cast a glance at the illuminated windows on his passage—rang the bell, and gained admission. The servant, who, by the way, was a stranger, and had come that day, replied to his questions

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for her mistress by saying that she had gone out, but would be home by ten o'clock.

"Very well," said the gentleman, dismissing her with an air of command that instinct impelled her not to gainsay: "I will await her return in the parlors:" and so saying, he entered them.

But although he had said he would await the lady's return, he seemed little disposed to do so, if one might judge by the impatience he exhibited during the first five minutes, and by some monosyllabic expressions that half escaped his lips. Presently he said aloud, "and the boy, too——" and without finishing the sentence, he strode to the parlor door, through the long passage, and up the stairs, into a room where the child, who has once before been introduced to the reader, lay in his little bed, asleep. The gentleman was tall and dignified, but he cast aside for the moment both his height and his dignity as he stooped down to kiss the rosy sleeper, and appeared to brush the moisture from his eye while he did so. Then passing one arm under the alabaster neck and raising the curly head, while he gently shook the child to rouse him, he said, "Charley, boy, wake up." The dreamer, however, was in too deep a sleep to be easily recalled to the things of earth: and the gentleman, perceiving it, replaced the head upon the pillow after a moment or two, murmuring that it was "a sin to disturb him," and retraced his steps to the parlor.

But he had scarcely seated himself there before his former impatience returned: in seeking some relief from which he rushed to the front door and looked out upon the illuminated street. Suddenly, as he stood there, a thought appeared to strike him, for he clapped his hands and a smile broke upon his countenance. It must have been a bright thought, or it could not have lighted up the gentleman's dark eyes with such a ray of pleasure as it did: and furthermore, it must have been a cunning thought, or he would not have nodded to himself so complacently after he had pondered upon it for a moment or two. Whatever it was, its next effect was to impel him to step in great haste to the neighboring grocer's, whence he presently returned, followed by a boy laden with a box and bundle. The box on being opened displayed spermaceti candles, and the bundle, on being relieved of its brown paper wrapper, tumbled over the floor in the shape of little tin candlesticks. These last the gentleman began to collect together, and to place in the windows, having first opened the shutters, while he ordered the boy to take a knife which he had thrown upon the table, and "cut the candles in three." The boy obeyed, and the gentleman went up stairs, bearing the remaining tin candlesticks, in order that he might prepare the windows there in like manner with those below.

Not to waste words, the arrangements were soon made, and their object effected: and the house, that in the early part of the evening was conspicuous for being a dark blank upon the illuminated street, if not as elaborately and tastefully lighted up as some of its neighbors, was at least no longer a mark for curiosity. Not at any rate to the crowd.

But was it astonishment, or curiosity, or apprehension that most pervaded the feelings of its poor mistress, as accompanied home by good Mr. Thompson, she gained her own pavement to meet the burst of factitious light from a dwelling from whose interior—to speak figuratively—the real light for her had gone out, oh, sad to think! perhaps forever, and of whose absence she had left the darkened windows as the type and emblem? It was doubtless at first a mixture of all. The thought that some insolent intruder had gained admission to her house to mock her loneliness by this outrage, thought which came at length, the only explanation that her reason could suggest, was not at all calculated to allay her agitation.

As to Mr. Thompson, he, good man!—inexperienced in solving mysteries, and ignorant of the impossibility that the new servant woman left alone to keep house, or the waiter, who had departed early in the evening to assist in some fire-works out of town, could have got up an illumination on their own account in her absence, he opined, by way of reassuring his companion that the domestics had only been entertaining themselves by lighting up a little: pleasantly adding in proof of such a supposition, the adage that "when the cat's away the mice will play."

But the lady answered him that this was out of the question. "There can be no doubt," said she, "that we have left the door ajar in going out, and that some one has entered to offer me this insult in the absence of my husband. How his brave blood would boil," she added, "and his soldier's hand would burn to punish such an outrage upon his wife's seclusion."

"Here is a hand then ready to do it in his name, my dearest madam, whoever he may be," said Mr. Thompson, as he rang the bell.

"Who has been here this evening?" he asked of the servant woman when she appeared.

"A gentleman, sir," she replied, "called and asked for Mrs. ———, and when he found she was not at home, and would not be till ten o'clock, and I could not tell him where she was gone, he said he would wait in the parlor till

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she came. I thought he might be a particular acquaintance—may be a relation—so I made no objections." So saying, she opened the parlor door, and, perceiving the illuminated windows, started back aghast.

Mr. Thompson entered with his cane raised, ready to punish the villain who had gained admission to the house under the specious pretence of being a visitor, but he was no where to be seen. "The scoundrel has decamped," he said, after casting his eyes all round the room. "He had seen me leave the house early in the evening in company with its mistress; no doubt, and conceived the design of playing this trick upon her, thinking it would be a glorious jest. He shall be found out yet, though, and suffer for it. Gentleman indeed! the audacious rascal."

Meanwhile the lady, still in a state of much agitation, inquired for her child; and the servant woman replying that she had gone up and looked at him a quarter of an hour before, and that he was then sleeping unmolested in his little room at the back of the house, they ascended thither together. He was, indeed, asleep, having suffered no other disturbance during his mother's absence than the gentle and affectionate one already known to the reader; and which had left no visible trace behind. But who shall say that it left not one invisible; or that the guardian spirits who watched over that infant's slumbers had not mysteriously instilled into his visions the image of a dear friend suddenly brought forward from the far perspective of the landscape of his dreams? Who shall say that the consciousness of the presence of a beloved parent unexpectedly restored to him, had not, by some magnetic influence, been conveyed to his sleeping senses, even though his waking ones might remember it not?

Be that as it may, the child stirred on hearing voices, and opening his eyes, said, "oh, mama, have you got back? Mama, I have dreamed about my papa. I thought in my sleep that he had come home, and brought you a present of a beautiful cactus. One kind of cactus, you know, looks something like a serpent. Well, mama, I dreamed that with grieving over papa's absence, you had grown scarcely to know one thing from another: and I thought that although the cactus was in bloom, and had on it beautiful, bright flowers, you would imagine it was a serpent, and would not look at it, nor touch it, nor water it. Was not that a strange dream, mama? and wouldn't it be odd if papa were to come home sooner than you expect?"

"Oh, that such a surprise were possible, my love. But get up and be dressed quickly, for we cannot stay here to-night. Some one has got into the house while I was absent, and I am afraid to remain. Get up, and we will return home with Mr. Thompson."

The child was soon ready, and hand in hand with his mother they descended to the parlor, where Mr. Thompson still stood, giving vent to his indignation in many denunciatory and threatening terms.

"Charley and I will return home with you to-night," said the lady. "Although it is hardly likely that the person who entered the house remained, or had any intention except to play a coarse joke upon me, the more insulting from my lonely position, still, after what has happened, I feel that I should be nervous the whole night if I were to stay here."

"Just what I was about to propose, my dear madam," replied Mr. Thompson. "But I must put these candles out before we leave; and do you sit down while I do so."

"Nay, you shall not put one out until you promise to leave the lady with me, and until she promises to remain," said a person, issuing from behind the folds of a curtain, which had heretofore screened him from observation, and catching the lady in his arms.

The lady gave one shriek of joy as she fell into his embrace, and the child running and putting an arm round each, exclaimed, "only to-night Charley said, wouldn't it be strange if papa were to come home soon."

"Tell us love," said the melancholy lady—melancholy now no more—when the first shock of her surprise was over, "tell us what brought you home?"

"My orders were countermanded just when I reached New Orleans," replied her husband, "and I am now to be stationed at ———. In a few days we must be ready to set out, and I shall, probably, remain there a year."

They arrived at their new location just in time to participate in another illumination, in which the reader is assured they were behind none of their neighbors in the various demonstrations befitting the occasion.

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